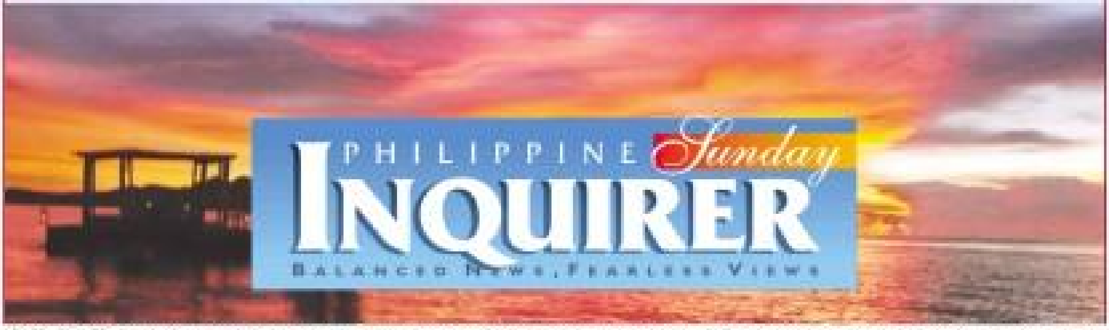
Sunday, November 23, 2008 • Vol. 23 / No. 349 website: www.inquirer.net



PHILIPPINE Sunday INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

SOME ENCHANTED ISLAND Sunset is a fiery rhapsody of colors viewed from the Kasoyan Bar which floats close to shore in Amanpulo in Pamalican Island. More colors define the sea from turquoise to green to deep blue. Takes a mere hour and half to take in the entire island. A stroll through the beach, a 5.5 km stretch of blinding white sand, should do it.

JDV finally spills beans

Ex-Speaker rats on First Couple, tells of secret ZTE meeting

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

BENJAMIN ABALOS WAS THOROUGHLY AT HOME IN THE ZTE headquarters and hogged the discussion on the National Broadband Network project. President Macapagal-Arroyo made no comment and her husband, Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo, hardly said a word.

But after lunch, Mike Arroyo suggested a formula that would eventually see the awarding of the NBN project to the Chinese telecommunications company.

This was how former Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. recalled a secret meeting on Nov. 2, 2006, at the headquarters of ZTE Corp. in Shenzhen, China, which, he said, sealed the $329 million (P16 billion) project that was mired in controversy and eventually scuttled.

And he has a "family picture" of that meeting in Shenzhen to prove his claim.

The Pangasinan congressman talked about the secret meeting in his biography, "Global Filipino: The Authorized Biography of Jose de Venecia Jr., the Visionary Five-Time Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Philippines."

The soon-to-be launched biography written by veteran American journalist Brett M. Decker, an editor of the Wall Street Journal in Hong Kong, devotes

JDV FINALLY/A8

Farmers take over Teves land after 11 years

By Ramy Amarado
Contributor

AFTER 11 HARD YEARS, FARMERS who years ago were awarded prime agricultural land belonging to the family of former congressman Herminio Teves are finally in possession of the 61-hectare Teves sugar plantation in Negros Oriental under the terms of the land reform law.

Dozens of policemen, a SWAT team and Army soldiers were on hand to help Rodolfo Inson, the regional director of the Department of Agrarian Reform in Central Visayas, preside over the takeover by 30 agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) of the Teves property on Nov. 22.

Nineteen beneficiaries took possession of 33 hectares of Teves farmland in Barangay Cansanalo, Sta. Catalina town, and 11 farmers took over 28 hectares of land in Villareal, Bayawan town.

Teves, who fought land reform coverage of his property for almost 12 years, said he only consented to the installation because he did not want the DAR regional officials "to be embarrassed."

He also wanted "to avoid bloodshed to happen in my property, the life of a person is more precious than a piece of a property," said Teves, the father of Finance Secretary Margarito Teves.

Farmer Victoriano Cordero thanked all the government agencies that worked to facilitate their takeover.

"Thank you so much that finally our dream that we poor farmers will be able to till our lands is now a reality," Cordero said.

"Praise God, for He granted our prayers. Despite the many challenges we faced, we persevered, and finally, here it is, the fulfillment of our dreams," said Rolando Flores, president

FARMERS/A6



EMERGENCY LANDING President Arroyo stays close to her husband, Mike Arroyo, (on a stretcher) as he's loaded into an ambulance at the Kansai International Airport near Osaka, Japan. The President's plane, en route to Peru via Los Angeles, made an emergency landing close to midnight Friday after the First Gentleman reportedly complained of intense stomach pain. REUTERS

Ailing Mike returns; GMA flies on to Apec meet in Peru

By Julie M. Aurelio, Kristine L. Alave and TJ Burgonio

THE HUSBAND OF PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo is back in Manila after an emergency hospital detour to Osaka, Japan, on Friday night while en route to Peru for the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) summit.

Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo was flown yesterday to Manila from Osaka by a private RB-125 plane owned by the food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp. It landed at the Villamor Air Base presidential hangar at around 2 p.m., according to Alfonso Cusi, general manager of the Manila International Airport Authority.

Cusi said Arroyo was in good spirits when he disembarked. "He was OK. He was walking and talking to his companions," Cusi said on the phone.

The President's husband was accompanied on the flight home by his doctors and his youngest child, Camarines Sur Rep. Diosdado "Dato" Arroyo, another airport official said.

At St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City later in the day, Mike Arroyo's doctors concluded that he suffered a

AILING/A8

Hidden meanings behind Luna's lost 'Roman Maidens'

By Ambeth R. Ocampo

FILIPINOS WHO FREQUENT US AND European flea markets in search of Amorsolos, Lunas and Hidalgos will tell you that the pickings nowadays are slim. If you do stumble upon a bit of Filipiniana these days, the prices can be quite steep.

They say there are no more bargains to be found, but a few years ago a large painting by Juan Luna turned up in an estate sale outside Paris. The large canvas (108x170 cm) depicting two Roman maidens, "Las Damas Romanas," painted by Luna in Rome in 1882, was put up for auction and was expected to fetch between 10,000 and 20,000 euros (between P623,000 and P1.3 million).

A group of Filipinos kept the news about the sale to themselves. They all chipped into a kitty and joined the auction by phone. Bidding was fast and spirited, but the Filipino group had to give up when the price went beyond 100,000 euros. The painting sold for over 200,000 euros (over P12.4 million) and reportedly went to a French art dealer.

That same Luna painting of Roman maidens is being put on the block again on Nov. 30 at Christie's in Hong Kong, with a floor price of between $1 million and $1.2 million.

The painting is practically buried in a sale of modern and contemporary Southeast Asian paintings, the only old work in a sale dominated by young, modern artists.

One can only hope that "Las Damas Romanas" will be acquired by a Filipino collector or institution and returned home. Unfortunately with the financial crisis and the controversy that attended

HIDDEN/A8

No hard feelings: Villar is 'game na game na'

By Delmar Cariño
Inquirer Northern Luzon

TUBLAY, BENGUET—PERHAPS THE FORMER President was only returning the favor?

Whatever, ousted Senate President Manuel Villar Jr. has "absolved" former President Joseph Estrada for reportedly being the hand behind Villar's ouster.

If you will recall, Villar pulled a fast one in 2000

NO HARD/A15



Read-Along goes to 4 cities nationwide

By the Inquirer Bureaus

A LAWMAKER, AN ACTRESS, TWO beauty queens, a movie director, a book author and a university professor took time out from their busy schedules yesterday to make history as they joined the simultaneous launching of the Inquirer Read-Along in Baguio, Naga, Tabuy and Davao Cities.

They read stories on the Mindanao war, children saving the environment and Cordillera ethnic war heroes. There were also tales of an Ifugao boy who dreamed of touching the sky and a grandmother who got sick, punched a hole in the sky and became a star.

They touched the hearts and minds of 250 young children in four cities, reading stories in various settings: A fairy-tale like gingerbread house (Tabuy), an alternative library and repository of rare books (Davao), a historic amphitheater that was a gift from the Americans (Baguio) and a children's library named after a late senator who loved reading (Naga).

It was the first time the Inquirer Read-Along sessions were conducted outside Metro Manila. Launched in May 2007, the Read-Along project received an award for excellence this

READ-ALONG/A15

• **GMA** arrives in Peru but misses Apec opening rites • US envoy asks RP, MILF to talk peace / **NEWS** • **Hillary** 'ready' for state dep't / **WORLD**



• **Madonna,** Ritchie granted preliminary divorce / **WORLD** • **Cycling** in the city: Tips on use of helmets; other safety reminders / **TALK OF THE TOWN** • **Robert** Aventajado, the multimillion dollar hostage negotiator revisited as entrepreneur / **SUNDAY BIZ** • **Philippine** spa among Asia's best / **LIFESTYLE** • Wide open job opportunities here and abroad / **JOB MARKET**

JOB Market

Second FRONT PAGE

SIX DIGIT · SUERTRES · EZ2

6/42 LUZ-VIS-MIN

4 10 11 28 33 36

P33,881,506.00

3 dead in Cagayan; calamity in Isabela

Incessant rains swell river, flood villages sending residents fleeing

TUGUEGARAO CITY—THREE PEOPLE DROWNED AS floods spawned by continuous rains since Tuesday swamped houses in low-lying villages in Cagayan province.

DOT targets the adventurous traveler

Satur urges united front against Cha-cha



US starts extradition process for fugitive ex-PNP officer



GATEWAY REGENCY
For Posterity
...because you want a home that even the next generation will love.
On Prosperity
...because today's shelter can be a source of income tomorrow.
At the core of the master-planned environs of Robinsons Cybergate Complex and located concentrically from Ortigas Center, Bonifacio Global City, and the Makati Business District, Gateway Regency is within minutes from work, leisure and entertainment spots as well as reputable educational facilities.
Enjoy spacious and appointed units for as low as P14,000 a month under the Super Easy Home Fixed Installment Promo - no downpayment, no lump sum payment, only one fixed installment amount from start to finish.
Call us today at 06326838101 or 0922-8380888 or visit www.robinsonsproperties.com.ph
PIONEER
E D S A
Ortigas
Makati
ROBINSONS LAND

Father, son on alleged Abu bombing mission nabbed

Return to peace table, US envoy urges gov't, MILF

Bell-ringing, prayers mark QC stop of Mindanao peace caravan

Women still want Manny Villar

320 graduates get DOST-SEI scholarship



Probe of 'freeloading' videoke firm urged

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Department of Science and Technology
SCIENCE EDUCATION INSTITUTE

Congratulations!

QUALIFIERS FOR DOST-SEI GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS IN SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) released the official list of qualifiers for master's and doctoral scholarships in priority science and engineering fields under the Accelerated Science and Technology Human Resource Development Program (ASTHRDP) and Engineering Research and Development for Technology (ERDT) effective Second Semester of SY 2008-2009. The new awardees will be notified on the schedule of orientation and the signing of the Scholarship Agreement.

Below is the list of qualifiers. The names may also be viewed at the DOST-SEI website www.sei.dost.gov.ph.

LABANAN ANG KAHIRAPAN.ISULONG ANG KARUNUNGAN

A project strongly supported by
PRESIDENT GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

GMA misses Apec opening; Romulo to join photo-op

By Michael Lim Ubac

Romulo

Technical stopover

Confusion

Puno's bulletin



"FAMILY PICTURE" taken at the golf course on Nov. 2, 2006 in Shenzhen, China, across the border from Hong Kong. From right, then Speaker De Venecia, Mike Arroyo, President Arroyo, then Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos and a "Mr. Yu" reportedly of ZTE.

JDV finally spills beans

From page A1

'Backroom Mike'

Game of golf

Surprises

Absent reporters

Sticking to her word

Turning point

Ailing Mike returns . . .

From page A1

No heart attack

Walking all the way

Healthy heart

Emergency landing warranted

Hidden meanings behind Luna's lost 'Roman Maidens'

From page A1

the acquisition of Luna's "Parisian Life" by the Government Service Insurance System in 2002, there is no hope for an intervention by the government.

But over a century since it was painted, "Damas Romanas" by Juan Luna y Novicio (1857-1899) was an unknown work. Documentation has been scant. "Damas Romanas" was only a title on the list of Luna works drawn up in 1957 by Luna biographer Carlos E. Da Silva.

A faded black-and-white photograph of it was reproduced in Santiago Albano Pilar's book, "Juan Luna: The Filipino As Painter," published in 1980. The photograph came from the files of the pioneer art dealer and historian Alfonso T. Ongpin.

The emergence of this early work enlarges our knowledge and appreciation of Luna who is unfortunately best remembered for his largest work, the "Spoliarium" (1884). The latter may well be Luna's most important painting historically but it is not necessarily his best aesthetically.

To appreciate the dark and gory "Spoliarium" that now dominates the Hall of the Masters in the National Museum, you have to remember that aside from being an artist, Juan Luna is also considered a hero and patriot of the Philippines.



GOING GOING GONE On the block at Christie's auction in Hong Kong next Sunday is the Luna painting, "Las Damas Romanas," which measures 100 x 190 cm. It was painted in 1882.

RP's 1st int'l artists

Spoliarium won the first gold medal in the Madrid Exposition of Fine Arts in 1884, a triumph that made Luna and his contemporary, Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo, who won a silver medal, the first "international artists" of the Philippines.

Luna painted a scene from ancient Roman history, the corpses of a gladiator being discarded in a room under the Colosseum. So powerful was this image that it was used by Filipino propagandists as an allegory of the abuses of the Spanish in the Philippine colony.

It takes a bit of imagination and a heavy dose of textbook history for young Filipinos to see oppression and the Philippines in a painting best understood alongside the Hollywood film, "Gladiator."

Unintended meanings

One can read many meanings into a painting, sometimes even meanings unintended by the artist. For example, in 1983, the "Spoliarium" was seen to be quite prophetic. The opposition leader Benigno S. Aquino Jr. was assassinated on Aug. 21, 1983, in the tarmac of the Manila International Airport. One of the photographs in a series showing soldiers dragging the corpse into a military van is said to mirror the main element in Luna's 1884 masterpiece.

"Damas Romanas" likewise draws from ancient Roman history, but it is a whole lot more cheerful. Two ladies are seen reclining on the wide steps of a dwelling. One of them is holding the reins of two frisky dogs, appearing to restrain them from coming away more doves that are frolicking about. In the background behind the figures is what appears to be a shelf with assorted artifacts. To their left is a small statue with a triangular pediment with incense smoke rising from a brazier in front of it.

Should "Damas Romanas" be seen at face value? Is it but a typical domestic scene in ancient Rome or does it have deeper, hidden meanings? There are three elements here: Women, dogs and doves. Dogs were part of Roman life and were basically used for hunting, as guardians of home or property, and in this case as companions of women. These slim and elegant dogs were pets, although they had to be kept on a leash. An inscription said to have been found in the ruins of Pompeii reads, "cave canis." It is a warning still used today—"beware of dogs." Doves were often given erotic connotations. In the Philippines, a woman referred to as kalapating mababa ang lipad (low-flying dove) means someone of ill repute.

In the painting an allegory of restrained lust or merely a way for Luna to recreate many details copied from museums abroad in Naples, Pompeii, Venice and Florence? It has even been suggested that the dark-haired woman on the right is Luna's wife, Paz Pardo de Tavera, whom he shot and killed in Paris in 1892 in a jealous rage. That would have fit the theme of love and lust but unfortunately, Luna was not married yet when he painted "Damas Romanas" in Rome in 1882. He had not even met his future wife at the time.

That multiple meanings, different interpretations can be found in one painting always adds to its interest. "Damas Romanas" was painted while Luna was a student of the Spanish Academy in Rome. It is a work completed between his prize-winning works "Death of Cleopatra" that won a silver medal in the Madrid Exposition of 1881 and the "Spoliarium" that took the first gold medal in the Madrid Exposition of 1884.

6 years in Rome

What is not well-known is that Luna spent six years in Rome from 1879 to 1884. He enrolled in the school of painting in the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando (Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando) in Madrid in 1877 and there took courses in color and composition and began a study of ancient art. One of his professors, Alejo Vera, went to Rome in 1879 to fulfill some commissions and he took Luna along as an apprentice.

Two years after arriving in what Luna described as "the capital of the Caesars," his teacher returned to Madrid and Luna stayed on another four years to complete his studies. Many students of the Academia de San Fernando in Madrid were allowed to gain credit for their stay in Rome.

The course of study usually took three years. The first year was spent copying Greek and Roman sculpture to learn anatomy. They studied and copied classical architecture to learn ideal proportion, and finally they copied old master paintings. The second year the students did work on the human figure.

Graduation work

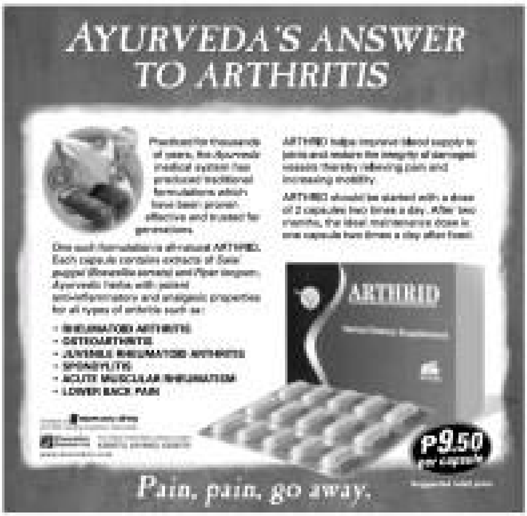
By the third year and final year, the students were expected to utilize all the skills learned by practice, travel and observation in producing one large historical painting drawn from either religious, classical, or historical sources.

Hence the 1881 "Death of Cleopatra," acquired by the Spanish government, could be seen as Luna's graduation work. As a recognition of his talent, Luna was awarded a four-year grant by the Ayuntamiento de Manila to continue his studies in Rome. The grant was also a commission to do one painting for the Ayuntamiento. In fact the grateful Luna gave them three. One of them, the "Pacto de Sangre" (Blood Compact), hangs in the seat of government, the Palace of Malacañang.

"Damas Romanas" is one of a number of drawings, watercolors and oils by Luna that have surfaced in the past quarter of a century. As an important example of Luna's early work, it helps us understand his training as an academic painter and enriches our knowledge of the life and work of this great master.







Farmers take over Teves land

From page A1

dent of the Villasol-Lavisandra Farmers Association (Vilfaraspa).

The farmers were issued the certificates of land ownership awards (Cloa) way back in 1997. But their takeover was delayed because of the protracted legal battle that ensued after Teves refused to have the farmland placed under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

In 2004, the Supreme Court decided the case in favor of the farmers when it upheld a Court of Appeals ruling validating CARP coverage of the Teves property.

The high court decision did not settle the matter, however.

Rival claimants

According to Flores, a group of farmers identified with the landowner, filed a petition claiming that they were the genuine beneficiaries of the Teves land. The petition remains pending with the DAR.

Despite the DAR Adjudication Board issuing a writ of execution in 2006, the installation of the farmer beneficiaries was delayed because of the unresolved petition of the other group of claimant farmers.

This forced some of the Vilfaraspa group to march in last October where they denied their lands and staged a fast in front of the DAR offices.

On Oct. 28, the group went on a hunger strike which was lifted last Nov. 10, after DAR Assistant Secretary Narciso Andres assured them that the farmer beneficiaries would be installed by Nov. 12.

Teves' gripe

In interviews with local media, Teves said his land was vastly undervalued by the government at only P3,000 per hectare which he said was peanuts compared to the valuation of other lands covered by CARP.

His grandson, Pryde Henry Teves, representative of Negros Oriental's 3rd district, earlier said the family was actually a victim because the value of the land set by the government was very low.

Hernández also assailed the selection of the beneficiaries, claiming that those issued with Cloas were not the real beneficiaries.

Iseon said the valuation being questioned by Teves was made by the Land Bank of the Philippines and was based on the declaration of its former owner, the late Senator Lorenzo Teves, Hernández's brother.

He explained that shortly after the implementation of CARP in 1988, the national government issued a directive for all the landowners to declare under oath their ownership of agricultural land under the so-called Land Value Program. Under the program, landowners were also asked to state the value of their properties in case these should fall under CARP coverage.

He said Lorenzo's land was among those listed under the program and the value stated was P5,000 per hectare.

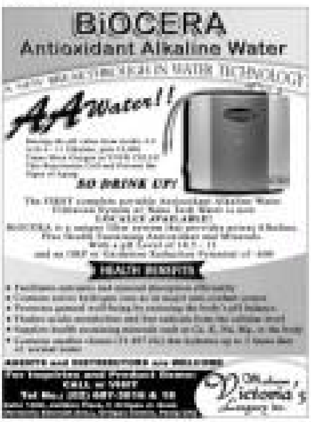
Invalid sale

Iseon also said that while there was a memorandum indicating that Lorenzo's property had been sold to Hernández, the sale was invalid because it did not comply with the law, which mandates that the sale of agricultural land after the effectivity of CARP should be registered.

Still, Iseon said the landowner could still request for a re-evaluation of the compensation that he will get for his land.

He said his office would also implement whatever the DAR national office decides on the issue of who are the real beneficiaries of the land.

"If the result of the inclusion and exclusion proceedings show that some of the so-called ARBs are not qualified, I will have it implemented," Iseon said.





PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
OPINION

Power play

PRIOR TO HER LAST STATE OF THE NATION address, President Macapagal-Arroyo was said to have pressured the oil companies to roll back oil prices, to sweeten the public mood going into her speech. The oil companies reportedly complied, but only after grudgingly viewing this would be the last time she would be able to do that. Everyone knows the President isn't shy about using moneymakers as a populist tool to shore up her sagging popularity. What she did to the oil companies she did to the telecommunications companies by pulling a stunt concerning text messaging in her national address, turning an ongoing promo on the part of some telcos into an administration achievement.

EDITORIAL

This is not to say that the President was incorrect to pressure the oil companies to reduce—but not curtail—their profits, but merely to turn obscene profits into extremely large ones. And this is not to say that using government's regulatory and other powers—including that of moral suasion—to accomplish oil, gas and transport fare rollbacks is wrong. Far from it. But it is to point out that this administration is not unique in viewing such things from the perspective of the political benefits such actions, and their timing, can produce.

Going into the holidays, the President herself has focused speaking out on consumer-related costs, mainly in terms of food, such as the cost of flour. Her subordinates have taken up the task of castigating the oil companies for what it has declared to be the foot-dragging of the oil firms in reducing the price of oil to reflect the drop in oil prices in the world market. Oil, over the weekend, dropped to price levels not seen since three years ago. A world that had been steeling itself to consider $150-per-barrel oil a permanent probability has seen oil prices drop to $50 a barrel in reaction to the contraction of the global economy.

The oil companies have rolled back prices from P1 to P2.50 a liter; they say the drop could have been as much as P5 a liter if it weren't for the ongoing depreciation of our national currency. But Ralph Recto, the National Economic and Development Authority chief, says the price rollback should in fact be P8 to P9.

What is interesting is that Recto tried to meet with the Independent Philippine Petroleum Companies Association (IPPCA), composed of Flying V, Eastern Petroleum, City Oil, Unioil, Seaoil, Filipinas Energy Corp. and Phoenix. These companies, while accounting for a small market share of the oil business in our country, play an important role because of their willingness and ability to undercut the prices of the big players, including Petron, Shell and Chevron. At times they have been more nimble in adjusting to changes in the global price for oil, and when they cut prices the big players, much to their chagrin, have to consider at least partially following suit. But when Recto met with the small players, at their behest, he says, because they were concerned about the government's computation of oil prices, they rebuffed his overtures for them to lower rates.

Recto says that if oil companies use the world market price of $56 per barrel and an exchange rate of P49.32 to the US dollar, then diesel prices should be brought down to P31.77 a liter while gasoline should be at P35.86 a liter. Last month, Recto's oil price estimates were based on a cost of $70 a barrel, and at the time said retail pump prices in the Philippines should've been at P33.52 a liter for diesel and P40.95 a liter for gasoline. Speaking for the small players, Rocario Villavicencio of Flying V said they were operating from a $65 to $67 price range per barrel of oil (MOPS), and that the retail price of P36 to P37 a liter of diesel was the right price. Both large and small players have tried to temper the public mood by dangling the prospect of bigger rollbacks by December of this year or January next year.

There is of course the problem that oil bought today for a certain price reaches the Philippines and can be sold to the consumer only some time later. The oil companies, big and small, insist they are entitled to recoup the actual costs of the oil they sell, even if the sales take place when the world market prices are much cheaper. But the public doesn't often think about this time lag nor, perhaps, does the government view it politic to factor this when it engages in populist-oriented pressuring of the oil companies. If the oil companies, as an industry, also bear a personal grudge against the President for the little public relations stunt she pulled last July, it only makes things worse for the consumer, caught in a power play between the government and the oil companies.

Publisher ISAGANI YAMBOT
Editor in Chief LETTY JIMENEZ-MAGSANOC
Managing Editor JOSE MA. D. NOLASCO
Associate Editor ABELARDO S. ULANDAY
Associate Editor for News Desk ROGELIO E. QUESADA
Opinion Editor JOHN V. RAMOS
News Editor ANTONIO T. BAÑOS JR. • Chief News Desk Operations MIKE D. PADUA
Chief, News Desk EDDIE C. ANOBENIA
National Editor FRANCISCO G. BUSTAMANTE JR.
Senior Desk Editor LITO T. ANIMAS JR.
Editorial Consultant RONALDO P. DUMANGAS
Chief Photographer ERNIE T. SARMIENTO
Art & Design Director LIZZIE A. PONESA
Board Chairman MARIXI R. PRIETO
President ALEXANDRA PRIETO-ROMUALDEZ
Senior Vice President for Sales and Marketing ROSARIO E. VELOSO
VP for Advertising FELIX B. OLARTE
AVP for Circulation ANDRE JOHN M. TAN



The backbone of a banana

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

(Below are excerpts from a speech I chose not to deliver last Thursday before the Rotary Club of Manila because of the lateness of the hour and the crowded program, to the relief of the grateful audience. This is the abbreviated talk I promised instead.)

WHAT IS JUSTICE? JUSTINIAN DEFINED IT many centuries ago as "the constant and perpetual wish to render every one his due." Cicero earlier described it as "the crowning glory of the virtues." Yet Clarence Darrow, that unreformed cynic, said, "There is no such thing as justice—in and out of court." Speaking of the same subject, Oscar Wilde, the great satirist, sneered, "The good ended happily and the bad unhappily. That is what fiction means."

Whatever our concept of justice, I believe our commitment to it must begin with the courts—of justice, as we call them. Although holding "neither purse nor sword," the judiciary is an indispensable ingredient of the democratic government. The lifeblood of every liberal democratic regime pulsates in the vitality of its judicial system and the capacity of the courts to uphold the majesty of law.

This recalls a pertinent incident involving Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, who was appointed in 1902 by another great American, President Theodore Roosevelt. Holmes was the embodiment of his honorific title, Roosevelt the implacable foe of the tycoons of Wall Street.

In a number of cases based on the Sherman Anti-Trust Law, the Justices of the US Supreme Court supported Roosevelt in his bold challenge to the big corporations. The lone dissenter was Holmes who called the law an "imbecile statute." Roosevelt was so enraged that he reportedly exclaimed for all to hear: "I could carve out of a banana a man with more backbone than Justice Holmes!"

I am not describing the members of our Supreme Court as bananas or comparing some of them, albeit undeservedly, to Justice Holmes. Holmes it was who said that freedom of expression protects not only the thought that agrees with us but also the thought that we abhor. If our present magistrates do not agree with that magnificent truth, I am ready for their anger.

The Supreme Court of the Philippines was like a pure and innocent maiden until its chastity was ravaged by martial law. Having savored the thrill of surrender during that fateful period, it has learned the practical benefits of accommodation with the political departments as a more convenient way of life. A regrettable example is Mabutas v. Lopez Vito, where it dismissed as constitutional challenge in the Pardo proposal as a political question and thus gave American more rights to our natural resources than our own citizens.

That recent case has since been reversed by more courageous decisions, but it continues to seduce the Supreme Court to go astray even as often. We had that reasonable fear before with the present tribunal composed of all appointees of President Arroyo except for one solitary figure from a past administration. However, this apprehension dissolved in 2006 when it decided three leading cases—Senate v. Ermita, Bayan Muna v. Ermita and David v. Arroyo—that asserted the unexpected notion that its allegiance was not to Malacañang but to the rule of law.

But, alas, our elation was short-lived. Early this year, the Supreme Court that before seemed so righteously bold reconsidered its firmness and decided to repeat, not for its own but its supposed failure in its beneficence. In Neri v. Senate, it sustained the President's executive privilege covering the dark secrets of the mal-odorous ZTE contract despite the people's constitutional right to transparency in government.

As a former member of the Supreme Court, I can say that it is easy to support any decision it chooses to make, good or bad, and for whatever motives. This can be done with jurisprudence. Chief Justice John Marshall of the US Supreme Court reportedly used to say after making up his own mind on what "pal" conclusion on a pending case, "That is my decision, gentlemen. Let Justice Story find the precedents."

Our high tribunal during martial law found enough jurisprudence to justify the Marcos despotism even as there were also enough contrary rulings from foreign courts. These better ones were buried in unmarked graves like the desaparecidos of the dictator.

Some of the justices who supported the Neri decision, many of whom are close friends of mine, may claim that they acted in good faith. But that presumption is disputable by the absence of their usual self-reliance, which are normal in some if not many of our judges, including justices.

My sympathies and admiration are for the minority dissenters led by Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno, together with Justices Antonio Carpio, Conchita Carpio Morales, Minita Chico-Nazario, Consuelo Ynares-Santiago and Adolfo Azcuna. The majority justices who showed forthrightness for their President are better ignored here in this gathering of free souls.

The national enterprise should be not the resurrection of tyranny but a courageous commitment to justice. This should be the first task of the Supreme Court, for the rest of us to follow.

Payback time, now

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

DURING A PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND recently, our Israeli guide told us the story that when President George Bush died, he was welcomed to heaven by almost everybody except Moses who snubbed him and refused to talk with him. When asked why, his response was: "The last time I talked to a bush, the Israelites were wandering in the desert for 40 years!"

* * *

Today is the Solemnity of Christ the King. In today's gospel (Mt. 25, 31-46), Jesus talks about the coming of the Son of Man when the shepherd will separate the sheep from the goats, when the righteous will be welcomed and the evil will be snubbed and condemned. How will the Lord receive us then? It all depends on the kind of life we are living now.

* * *

Border crossings, especially by land, are tedious, inconvenient and often scary. One has to have the necessary requirements, the right answers and even the proper demeanor before the immigration officer. Recently, at the Jordan-Israel border, one of our pilgrims was interrogated by security officials because he was seen taking a photograph. The point is that there are rules to be followed, and there are requirements to be complied with, otherwise, no entry. The same with the Kingdom of God. There will be a final judgment, a final reckoning. This should serve as a warning to those who continue with their evil ways, and a consolation for those who follow the path of righteousness.

* * *

In the Philippines a lot of rules can be bent, a lot of requirements can be waived and even terms can be extended. While this experience makes us realize the gratuity of the Kingdom of God, this should not blind us from the finality of the Kingdom of God. There are requirements. There are deadlines and there are borders lines. Before and until we come to terms with death and judgment, we may think that life is one fun-filled endless summer. Summer is not forever.

Mothers is mindful for the masses.

* * *

It's payback time. Now is payback time. Not tomorrow, or later when you and I are older and mellower, and definitely not in the "last two minutes" of our lives.

* * *

We Filipinos are a "maybe" people. And so it is that we operate much on our "bahala na" (maybe by chance), "baka sakali" (maybe by accident), and "bahala na" (maybe by luck) mentality. While such attitude leaves much room for the power of the divine in our lives, we are reminded today by no less than Christ our King that we cannot and should not leave something as serious as our personal salvation to chance, randomness or luck. The rule is clear: Do good, and avoid evil.

Some people have this myopic vision that as long as they pray, do their religious obligations or contribute to charity, it is all right to be mean, greedy and corrupt. It is not all right! The big picture is: whatever you did or did not do to the least of your brothers and sisters! The bottom line is: love of God is expressed in our love of neighbor.

* * *

What is true religion? Someone described it as kindness in the home; honesty in business; courtesy and respect in society; thoroughness in work; fairness in play; help to the poor; understanding to the weak; forgiveness to the fallen; correction to the evil; forgiveness to the enemy; compassion to the fallen; reverence and obedience to God. Perhaps, as you listen to Christ the King today, you can add to the list your own idea of what true religion is.

* * *

Do you share the same horizons with Christ the King? In other words, is His agenda, vision and mission also your agenda, vision and mission? It's time to check our bearings. It's time to evaluate our life direction, our values, our lifestyle. The time to do that is now, not when we are already about to face Him, or when we are already face to face with Him. The reason perhaps why we are not focused on Christ the King now is because we are still in pursuit of the service of other kings like money, power, pride, pleasure and politics. So, when oh when will you really and fully start serving Christ your King?

* * *

Do you believe in the phenomenon called "act of God"? But when someone thinks everything is in place, everything is in order, everything is proceeding as planned, God steps in, and something happens, or something does not happen. We who follow and serve Christ the King must continue to believe that our King is in total control of everything and of everyone.

* * *

Inviting you to the Eucharistic Congress with the Holy Desire at No. 71 Kennedy Ave., New Manila, QC on Nov. 29, 2008 from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., with the theme "The Eucharist and St. Paul." The speakers are Bishop Gilbert Garcera, DD, Fr. Roderick Salazar, SVD and Fr. Apolinario Ty, SSS. The procession of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction will be presided by Bishop Pat Alo. For inquiries, call 722-9928/ 09172721177.

Baby Mananda invites you to a forum on "What you need to know about Parkinson's Disease," with Dr. Banbo Diaz. For inquiries, call 371-2262/ 0917-4 167999.

* * *

A moment with the Lord:

Lord, help me not to postpone my payback time to you and to the world. *Amen.*

JPE, Manny and Kiko

WITH DUE RESPECT

Artemio V. Panganiban



Rage

REBEL WITHOUT A CLUE

Patricia Evangelista



AIDS and seafarers' partners

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David



Motor City meltdown

WORLD VIEW

Thomas I. Palley



Project Syndicate

THEY SAID

Learning to wait

Killing the dead

A hands-off President

TALK of the TOWN



GREEN COMMUTE

Cycling in the city

By Dino Alberto E. Sabingabing

I'M A COMMUNICATION SPEcialist working with an NGO health project. A regular working dude—except that I've been a bicycle commuter for the past 15 years.

[illegible]

Improvised poncho

[illegible]

Own pace

[illegible]

Benefits

[illegible]

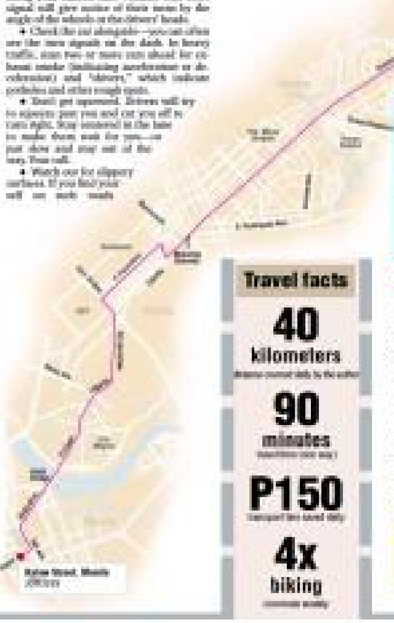
Lessons

[illegible]

Pedestrians

[illegible]









Tips on the use of bicycle helmets

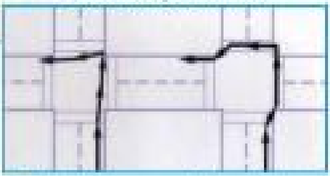
1 [illegible]

2 [illegible]

3 [illegible]

4 [illegible]

Other safety reminders



When making a left turn

[illegible]

When biking at night

[illegible]

When biking on steep slopes

[illegible]

When biking on shared paths

[illegible]

What to do if you are in a collision

[illegible]

Travel facts

40 kilometers

90 minutes

P150

4x biking

INQUIRER Mindanao

E-mail: [illegible]
Website: [illegible]
Editor: Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief: Nico B. Alconaba

They may forgive, but never forget

Victims of Moro rebel assault in town try to cope with the nightmare

By Rolando R. Pinsoy
Kolambugan, Lanao del Norte



WOMEN and children suffer most from the fighting in Mindanao. Tedora? Pinsoy? looks weary and tired. Three days after she delivered her eighth baby, Pinsoy? has to evacuate again.



US TROOPS give hands-on marksmanship training to Filipino soldiers under the 43rd? Infantry Battalion in [illegible], Lanao del Norte.

THE PASTOR TALKED about forgiving people who had done them wrong, but his listeners were unimpressed. Some were anxious to leave, while others wanted to stay and start life anew in the same place of atrocity.

For more than two months, residents of Barangay Pansor? in Kolambugan, Lanao del Norte, have been staying at the [illegible] Cabrera National High School since their village was attacked by Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels in the early morning of Aug. 18.

It was the community's first horrifying experience—unimaginable to Christians and Muslims living in peaceful coexistence. Some residents were killed, while others were taken as hostages.

"MOA man diay to nga wala pirmahan ni Arroyo (I think it was because of the MOA that President Macapagal-Arroyo did not sign)," said Matilde Eballe, 51, when asked why her town was sieged.

Eballe, a small store owner and fish vendor, never cared to learn about the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD) as part of the peace negotiations between the government and the MILF and whose aborted signing has led to fresh fighting between the two parties.

Lost pail of coins

"I am so busy with making a living everyday that I do not have time to think about that. What I wanted was to earn every day to survive. More so now that I don't have any means of living anymore," she said in the local language.

She was referring to her store which was ransacked by the rebels. Merchandise worth about P50,000 and a pail of coins she had saved for many months, which amounted to about P20,000, are all gone.

Eballe has been looking for a place to rent in the neighboring town of Tubod for her Bervic? partner and all her four married children and grandchildren. "What is important for me now is for my family to be able to live in peace away from the threats of the next attack of the MILF," she said.

During the attack, Eballe was shot and wounded in the right thigh when two of her neighbors tried to run away from the rebels while being brought to the town center. Three of her male neighbors were instantly killed.

"I may have come out alive now, but I might be killed the next time because the MILF has promised to come back. We better go to a safe place," said Eballe.

No ill-feelings

"I don't have ill feelings against my Muslim neighbors. They are also affected by the war. Though they are also Muslims, it was the MILF who did this to us," said Eballe when asked how she feels toward her Muslim neighbors.

While Eballe has chosen to leave, another resident will remain in Pansor and rebuild her life and home. One question for her has been unanswered though.

"Why did this happen to us?" asked Raisa Bedrico, 29. The rebels killed her husband [illegible] when they fired indiscriminately at their house.

Her 22-year-old nephew, Jaime Dagoon, was hit in the head and died. Her 14-year-old son, William James, was wounded in the left arm.

"I cannot understand why my husband was killed when he had never held a gun all his life, yet he died from a gun," she said, holding back the tears.

Church teaching

"But I do not want to blame anyone for what had happened. It will not bring my husband back," Bedrico said.

She vowed never to put hatred in her heart that would prevent her living a normal life as possible with her three children.

"If I teach my children to hate Muslims, what will happen? Violence is not going to end. That is not what our Church has taught us," she added.

The residents of Pansor are coping with the tragedy in different ways, their lives changed forever by a war they do not understand.

While it may be possible for them to forgive, they can never forget.

> 'I cannot understand why my husband was killed when he had never held a gun all his life ...'

Senate to probe smuggling of sugar

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—SENATE MAJORITY LEADER Juan Miguel Zubiri on Thursday said a Senate investigation would be conducted on the continued smuggling of sugar into country so that legislation could be passed to impose penalties on those who fail to enforce the law against smuggling.



ON THE TENTH day of their protest, the Mamamayan Ayaw sa Aerial Spraying (Maas) continues to rally in front of the Court of Appeals in Cagayan de Oro City to press for a ban on aerial pesticide spraying.

Farmers shave heads to protest aerial spraying

Pangasinan town ventures into making paper caskets

By Yolanda Sotelo
Inquirer Northern Luzon

HOMETOWN Snapshots



BACOLOD CITY Peque Gallaga, award-winning movie director, entertains about 50 kids at Carmel Cottage in Talisay. The other reader is from Alitaptap, Rich Rodriguez, a Read-Along regular.



BAGUIO CITY Angel Aquino (who studied at UP Baguio) is dressed for the occasion as she reads to about 70 children the story of Ifugao warriors at the Bell Amphitheater in Camp John Hay.

Read-Along goes to four cities nationwide

From page A1

year from the Philippine Quill, the country's most prestigious award-giving body for business communication, for spreading the passion for reading to more than 5,000 children.

Intense

In Talisay, Nimia Lachica arrived at the Carmel Cottage School looking every inch a girl stricken with cancer—pale and still exhausted from the effects of chemotherapy.

A few minutes later, her face lighted up as she listened intently to a story told to her and 45 other children, almost half of whom were gravely ill like Nimia.

The story was read by movie director Peque Gallaga, celebrity reader for the launching of the Inquirer Read-Along in the Visayas. He read the story "Wisdom in the Sky" written by Maria Milagros Garcia and illustrated by Ningning Poon Ng.

Gallaga's eyes grew big, his voice rose and dropped and his arms waved as he told the story of a grandmother who got sick and became a star.

The director's engaging performance was followed by professional storyteller Rich Rodriguez, a member of the Alitaptap Foundation, who also kept the children enthralled with stories of courage and hope.

War makes me sad, too

In Davao City, Inibedis Rep. Luzviminda Ilagan read to 50 children from a poor rural community of Mahondan in Toptok Diarist the story "Malungkot Ako Kapag May Digmaan" (War Makes me Sad).

Written by Mary Ann Ordinario, a child educator based in Kidapawan City in North Cotabato, the story is based on the author's personal experience as a child in a war-ravaged Mindanao.

Miss Earth Philippines-Ecotourism Marla Wisan Bag kept 70 children spellbound in Naga City as she related the story of "Emang Engkantada at ang Tatlong Hangaan (Emang the Fairy and the Three Greedy Bears)."

Kristian Sendon Cordero, a Bakoven awardee and Bicol linguist, poet, book author, read the story about the journey of a tiny raindrop from the clouds to the land, rivers and dams—an allegory of the importance of water to the living.

Upland culture

In Baguio City, actress Angel Aquino, who played the role of an Ifugao woman in the 1996 movie "Mumbaki," reconnected with upland culture when she read to 70 children the story of Ifugao warriors in the Read-Along session at the Bell Amphitheater in Camp John Hay.

"I have always wanted to read something that speaks about our culture and Baguio have a very rich culture," Aquino told the Inquirer.

She read the Ifugao war epic, "Mga pigua at Pinakahinugan Mga Bayaning Mandirigma ng Ifugao (Alignyan and Pumbakhayon: The Warrior Heroes of Ifugao)," a story retold by Eugene Evasco. The book was illustrated by Ferdinand Doctolero.

Reviving the habit

Aquino, a graduate of the University of the Philippines Baguio, wore a tapis (Cordillera wraparound skirt) as she read to students of the University of Baguio Laboratory Elementary School and the Baguio Central School.

A mother of two girls, Issa, 13, and Thea, 12, Aquino said she has always enjoyed reading stories to children because she finds the activity enriching to both the children and the reader.

"I like reading to kids because of their attentiveness. If there were more elderly people who could be encouraged to read along with the kids, then we could bring back the habit of reading," she said.

Cecilia Fe Abalos, a Speech Communication professor at UP Baguio, read Iris Dora Li's "The Boy Who Touched Heaven" after Aquino's interaction with the children.

The book was a winner of the Elias Dalida storywriting competition on environment and culture and was published by Tahanan and Adarna House. It was illustrated by Sergio Bumanog III.

Abalos, mother of 6-year-old Francesca, said story-reading sessions help promote the habit of reading among children amid the distractions of computers. It also helps strengthen the bond between parent and child, she said.

More meaningful

Rep. Ilagan's experience as an educator for 41 years made the Davao session more meaningful, because her audience felt what the child in the story was feeling—pain, suffering and fear of living in a war-torn area.

Emotions rose when the child in the story narrated how she did not have food to eat and water to drink.

When Ilagan asked the audience how they felt when the story was being read, a child quipped: "Natakot po (We were scared)."

Asked what they should do to help the children of war, another child said: "Magbigay po ng tsinelas (We must give them sandals)."

Another reader, Miss Earth Philippines-Air Marie Hazel Eguia of Bigeing City, read "Eco-Defenders: Ang Bagapagtanggol ng Kalikasan," a story about children who become superheroes by saving electricity, conserving water and practicing the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle).

"When they save the environment, children can become superheroes without having the ability to fly," Eguia told the listeners.

The children from Mahayahay were also treated to a puppet show presented by the students of a private school in downtown Davao called Mano School.

Interactive

In the Naga session, students, mostly from Concepcion Pequeña Elementary School, enjoyed the one-hour interactive storytelling held at the children's section of the Raul S. Roco Library in the City Hall compound.

Abel, a Grade 6 pupil, said he enjoyed the activity "because it was challenging and tested his ability to comprehend during the question-and-answer portion after each story.

Kelsiah Carlipto, 14, a Grade 4 pupil at Baguio Central School, said reading is still the best way to sharpen one's thinking.

"We learn a lot when we read. We learn history, facts and information we need to help us in our education," she said. The Baguio session was cosponsored by the John Hay Management Corp.

A Dimaculin, Ilagan said the Read-Along was "both educational and creative in widening the children's view of the world—outside the world that they already know."

"These children already know what is happening around them. More so here, they are already aware of the realities but this activity allows them to experience reality in a different way. This is where their values are formed," Ilagan said.

Reports from Jhoeie G. Calara, Charlene Cayabyab and Nestor Chiong, Inquirer Northern Luzon; Jack Escandor Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon; Carla Gomez, Inquirer Visayas; and Jeffrey Tupas, Inquirer Mindanao

No hard feelings: Villar ...

From page A1

when he used a prayer to transmit the articles of impeachment against then President Estrada to the Senate.

Last week, Estrada allegedly helped remove Villar as Senate president because the former reportedly wants the latter out of the way of the opposition ticket in the 2010 presidential election.

Estrada has denied any hand in the coup that saw Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, an ally of both President Macapagal-Arroyo and her deposed predecessor, take the plum post from Villar.

Villar, who was here yesterday as guest of the town's 50th founding anniversary, said he harbors no ill feelings over the latest development in the Senate that led to losing his grip on the third highest position in the land.

'He's still my friend'

"It's OK. Ito mga bagay na gamyon, ... na mga ... Marami na ... sa buhay ko at ... ko ... (We're used to these things. We've overcome hardships and we can easily accept this)," he said.

"Si Erap ay ... kaibigan ... friend)," Villar said. "I respect him as a friend. I have no bad feelings for him."

He made a dig at his colleagues in the Senate by alluding to this town's cool climate: "Malamig dito, mainit ... sa Manila ... Para sa Senado, ... Dito ... sa Manila. So many people are hot-headed. Just like in the Senate, there are many hot-headed people," he said.

Villar for president

Now free from his task as Senate president, Villar said he would live up to his word by making use of his time to work on his presidential bid.

Yesterday, Villar related his rags-to-riches story, the same one he told when he first ran for the Senate.

Still smarting from the Senate ouster, he said his poor and humble beginnings and his climb to success gave him enough experience to know what the country needed to progress.

Asked if his speech signaled the beginning of his presidential campaign, Villar said: "Game na game na. (I'm more than ready). But we are more serious this time."

He also said he wanted to ramp up his campaign and work on his advocacy for the welfare of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).

"Now that I have more time, I will be visiting more places with OFWs and I will see why and their lives have improved," Villar said.

In La Trinidad town, Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano refused to words saying that politics was behind Villar's ouster.

Cayetano said there would be more politics and less work as the 2010 presidential election nears. *With Inquirer Research*



Nahanap na ang mga idolo ng pamilyang OFW.

MOFYA 2008

Dr. Ibrahim Bahjin. Community Leader. Peacemaker. Family Man.
Capt. Victor del Prado. Seaman. Entrepreneur. Ama.

Sa inyo, mga huwarang 2008 awardees ng Model OFW Family of the Year, Saludo po ang Globe!

DOLE OWWA

Globe

Aplus METRO

FROM UP TO THE MET

Renowned soprano has done the country proud

By Julie M. Aurelio

EVEN AS A CHILD, EVELYN Mandac's voice was already extraordinary enough to make her stand out from the crowd.

The 69-year-old soprano—the first Filipino singer to perform at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York—said it was Stella Plaga, her music teacher at the Cubao Elementary School in Quezon City, who first "discovered" her.

"She would teach us songs during class and I would stick out because I had a high voice. She told me I sang well and that I could join a choir," Mandac told the Inquirer in a recent interview.

The New York-based soprano has performed in opera houses in the US and Europe, and at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. She has sung the lead in more than 20 operas at the Met and is the first Filipino to sing in an opera with well-known tenor Placido Domingo.

Earlier this month, Mandac flew into the country to take part in a classical concert organized by the UP Alumni Association.

It was a nostalgic homecoming for her since she studied for six years at the then UP Conservatory of Music.

"Actually, I haven't gone around much, but UP is so different now. The buildings are new and the campus is bigger. It was different during our time," she said.

Born in Malaybalay, Mandac and her family moved several times because their father, Manuel, an Army general, was assigned to different places. Later on, the family would make Mandaluyong City their home.



MANDAC says she was "discovered" by her Grade 4 music teacher.

From singing in the church choir at age 12, Mandac was elected president of the glee club at UP High School. She often took part in school plays until her graduation in 1958.

Eight years later, after studying at UP, she left for the US to pursue post graduate studies on a Fulbright travel grant.

"I never thought of pursuing an opera career. My plan was to study singing abroad and then come back home," she said.

Turned away

While studying at Juilliard, Mandac auditioned for an opera group but was turned away because of a surplus of sopranos.

Undaunted, she tried again and was pleasantly surprised when she was given the lead role in an opera.

"It's like I was bitten by the opera bug. I told myself, 'Oh my God, I love opera!' I wanted to do this, to be part of it," Mandac said.

In 1975, she stood on the stage of the Met at the Lincoln Center and sang the role of Lauretta in Puccini's "Gianni Schicchi."

"It was like a fog to me, like nervous excitement. I could remember putting on my makeup and being called to the stage. I didn't think much about the fact that I was the first Filipino to sing there," she said.

From the Met, she would go on to sing in different opera houses all over the world before her retirement in the 1990s.

Her New York apartment, which she shares with husband [illegible], is now a classroom where she coaches her students on singing techniques and the interpretation of the classics. It is also where she tells them that sometimes, being talented may not be enough for one to succeed.

Hard work and luck

"It doesn't come just because you have the voice. You must work hard for it or else you won't make it. It's about luck, too. I was in the right place at the right time so I got the breaks," Mandac explained.

Once a year, she makes it a point to travel to the Philippines, not just to visit her family but also to conduct workshops for students at the UP College of Music.

"Even if I live abroad, there will always be a part of me that will want to be connected with this country with my family and to teach young students who dream of singing," she said.



Mother loses 2 sons, finds solace in Saudi

'Can you imagine losing your sons one after another in the same year? It's impossible!'

By Karlo Jose R. Pineda
Contributor

THERE ARE MANY reasons why Filipinos depart for a foreign land, stretching from the all-pervading urge to earn in dollars to the self-indulgent itch to shop in the street markets of Hong Kong.

Handling emotions

'It's crazy'



FROM SAUDI WITH LOVE



LOVE OF HER LIFE

Lighting candles

'ICEmen' cometh for the undocumented



IMFO
Lourdes Santos Tancinco

Never cool

Fugitive program

Remedial measures

Separation as a penalty

Terror plot mastermind killed by US missile



RAUF

GM dumping jets after solons' outcry



A WOMAN carries a pot of water at a camp for people displaced by fighting in eastern Congo on Nov. 22. Shootings, looting and rape have plagued the already desperate lives of refugees.

Congo refugees in desperate straits

New bomb attack hurts 8 protesters in Thailand



LILLE Mayor Martine Aubry (left) and Segolene Royal

Aubry wins tight race to lead French Socialists

Malaysia Islamic body bans yoga for Muslims

The WORLD

Editor: Lowen R. Bueno

Clinton 'ready' for state department, say confidants

WASHINGTON—HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON has decided to give up her Senate seat to become secretary of state in the Obama administration, making her the public face to the world for the man who dashed her own hopes for the presidency, confidants of Clinton said on Friday.

The accord between the two leading figures of the Democratic Party was the culmination of a weeklong drama that riveted the nation's capital. President-elect Barack Obama and Clinton fought perhaps the most punishing nominating battle in decades, but in recruiting her for his Cabinet, Obama chose to turn a rival into a partner, and she concluded she could have a greater impact by saying accepting the post than by remaining in the Senate.

Her selection is still to be formalized and will not be announced until after Thanksgiving. It would be yet another direction in the unlikely journey of a former political spouse in Arkansas who went on to build a political base of her own and became a symbol of achievement to many women.

The sometimes awkward dance between Obama and Clinton in the eight days since he invited her to Chicago for a meeting culminated in a telephone call on Thursday. Before the call, Clinton was skeptical about the prospect of joining the Cabinet, said her confidants, who insisted on anonymity to discuss the situation. But Obama addressed her concerns about access, personnel and other issues, leading her to conclude she should take the job, they said.

"She's ready," one of Clinton's confidants said. The first meeting in Chicago "was so general" that she needed to have a better sense of how she would fit into Obama's administration, and the call helped her "feel getting comfortable" with the idea of working together, the confidant said.

Obama's advisers said that although no offer had been formally accepted, her nomination was "on track" and would probably be announced after the holiday. Clinton's Senate office broke a week of silence to acknowledge the talks but cautioned that they had not been made final.

"We're still in discussions, which are very much on track," said her spokesperson, Philippe Reines. "Any reports beyond that are premature."

Advisers said Obama concluded after the election that the problems confronting the nation were so serious that he needed Clinton's stature and capabilities as part of his team, notwithstanding their past differences. The bitterness that inhabited the Obama team for much of the year has faded with time, advisers said. NYT

We'll fight back, Somali pirates warn

MOGADISHU—SOMALI pirates holding a huge oil-laden Saudi tanker on Saturday vowed to fight back should any assault be attempted to free the ship and urged its owners to pay up a $25 million ransom.

As world powers rushed naval forces to Somalia's dangerous waters amid growing concerns of major disruptions in international trade, the pirates consolidated their hold with more men and weapons.

Speaking to AFP from the pirate lair of Haradheere, a member of the group holding the Sirius Star said there was no plan to destroy the supertanker or harm its crew but warned any military bid to free it would be "disastrous."

"I hope the owner of the tanker is wise enough and won't allow any military option because that would be disastrous for everybody. We are here to defend the tanker if attacked," Mohamed Abdullahi said.

"Their intention is clear, I was speaking to them some minutes ago and they told me they are not going to destroy the ship or harm the crew. They are hoping to get what they demanded," he said from Haradheere, north of Mogadishu.

Local residents said that reinforcements of at least 30 well-armed men joined the pirates holding up the ship, which anchored off Haradheere with its 25 crew three days after being hijacked on Nov. 15.

"Early this morning, I saw at least 15 heavily armed pirates heading to the ship. Their boat returned after dropping them off," local fisherman Hassan Ahmed said.

Residents said clan militia and Islamist fighters had arrived in the village and fist skirmishes over the past two or three days.

The Islamist Shebab group which controls much of Somalia has repeatedly stated it was fiercely opposed to piracy, which in Islamic law is a capital offense, and has vowed to root out pirates. AFP



MADONNA and British director Guy Ritchie in May. 2i photo. AP

Madonna, Ritchie granted preliminary divorce

LONDON—AFTER THE WEDDING in a Scottish castle, the mansions and grand English estate and the drinks in their own pub, Madonna and Guy Ritchie's eight-year marriage ended in a dreary London courtroom.

The case of "Ciccone M.L. v Ritchie G.S." was one of 17 divorce decrees granted by Judge Caroline Reid during a hearing on Friday in a humble St. London court that was over in a few minutes.

There was no legal obligation for 50-year-old Madonna or Guy Ritchie, 40, to attend the hearing at which they were granted a decree nisi, the first of two stages of divorce. The divorce can become final after six weeks and a day with the granting of a decree absolute.

Court papers signed by Madonna in Los Angeles confirmed that the queen of pop petitioned for divorce on the basis of Ritchie's "unreasonable behavior," and that there is no need to apply family law to the case—meaning that the couple have reached their own agreement over their assets and children.

Madonna and Ritchie have two children, Rocco, 8, and David Banda, 3, who was adopted from Malawi in 2006. The singer has a 12-year-old daughter Lourdes, from a previous relationship with personal trainer Carlos Leon.

Madonna and Ritchie appear to have avoided an expensive courtroom battle like the one between former Beatle Paul McCartney and model Heather Mills.

Mills has said media coverage of the acrimonious divorce had pushed her to the brink of suicide. McCartney compared the process to going through hell. AP





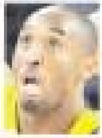
WHAT'S INSIDE

RP chessers bow to Dutch /A22

Sunday SPORTS

Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres
Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Ochoa

Lakers continue hot start; Celtics score /A24



Aces crush Texters with big run



FOILED Plantbook hungrer Rico Villanueva has his ... dropped away by ... Coca-Cola's ... during their Friday night game. The Giants defeated the Tigers, 91-73.

By Marcus R. Castillo

IT'S NOT EVERYDAY THAT YOU SEE TIM CONE sitting pretty—and smiling—on the bench.

Alaska yesterday dropped a 26-6 run in a stretch that bridged the second and third periods, requiring little coaching from Cone the rest of the way of a 113-96 dismantling of Talk 'N Text in the KFC Philippine Cup elimination at The Arena in San Juan.

"It was just one of those nights," Cone said of ... everything goes right for us and everything goes wrong for them.

"I've experienced that as a coach on the other end, and it's always nice to be at this end with ... end of it."

That 26-6 run was the second-longest in league history, just six points short of the ... that Ginebra ... in the fourth quarter of a 116-96 win over Shell in Game 5 of the 1991 First Conference Finals.

And that was enough to take the fight out of Talk 'N Text yesterday, when the Aces turned a 12-13 first quarter deficit into a 38-23 lead, heading into the final 10:32 of the second period.

The Tropang Texters, meanwhile, missed all 11 of their attempts from the field, two from the free throw line and had two turnovers during that crippling stretch on the way to a 0-7 card.

"This will just motivate Talk 'N Text," Cone said of the squad mentored by close friend Chot Reyes. "I hate to be the next team that plays Talk 'N Text."

Barangay Ginebra got 22 points from Sunday Salvacion and 18 from Paul Artadi to beat Sta. Lucia, 99-81, in the other match.

GAMES TODAY
(Cuneta Astrodome)
4 p.m. — ... vs ...
6:30 p.m. — ... vs San Miguel

Pacman's 95% ready–trainer

By Salvee Lagunday, Contributor

LOS ANGELES—BOXING SUPERSTAR Manny Pacquiao has now breached the 95 percent conditioning level with still two more weeks left before he takes on the Golden Boy Oscar De la Hoya in Las Vegas.

This was the assessment made Friday by Pacquiao's Filipino trainer Buboy Fernandez following another day of heavy training at the Wild Card Gym under the supervision of trainer Freddie Roach.

"He's 90 to 95 percent ready," said Fernandez, the boxer's long-time pal, in Filipino. "His chances are very good."

...



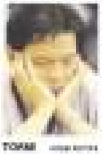




ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

RP chessers bow to Dutch



TORRE

Orcas ready for Taiwan swim meet

IN HUDDLE



SPORTSWATCH

Ugba 9-stag semis today



Harbour Centre triumphs

Bacchus snaps two-game skid



Adamson, SSC target V-League final slots

Jones, Damayanti forge final showdown

Veteran ace shines as Taguig clips Muntinlupa

Filipinos join 'Homeless' football

Arcilla, Tierro clip PCA foes



IRGP2 race gets going next week

Carlos, De Guzman lead Junior World squad



MARCELO

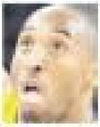
Marcelo eyes Asian karting crown defense

Sunday SPORTS

Lakers continue hot start; Celtics score



GARNETT



BRYANT

Breeders' Cup kicks off today



Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino
Sunday Biz

Entrepreneurial aspect of a hostage negotiator


AFTER Aventajado negotiated for the release of Italian priest Luciano Benedetti, he got an audience with Pope John Paul II with his wife Teresita.

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

TO SAY THAT HE IS MULTIFACETED MAY be an understatement.

Some eyebrows still tend to go up when his name crops up. Blame it partly on his close association with Joseph Estrada, the only Philippine president convicted of plunder, whom he practically grew up with.

But this was largely because of a suspicion spread by some that he and Estrada pocketed $25 million belonging to Libya, one of the most feared governments in the world—a country that does not allow a wrong done to it go unavenged.

That claim angered him so much he wrote a book about the whole story.

But that experience catapulted him from a virtual unknown to one with a 90-percent awareness rating nationwide.

But that was years ago. These days Robert Aventajado is busy being an entrepreneur.

His name has been in the sports pages because he is with the group of businessman Jose Cojuangco Jr., which seeks to change the current leadership of the Philippine Olympic Committee. Aventajado is probably the longest reigning National Sports Association president, having been head of the Philippine Tae Kwon Do Association for over two decades. The sport has become one of the biggest in the country.

Recently, his name landed on the business pages because of his involvement in a huge project of Korean firm Hyung-A in Subic—the development of a $1-billion resort community that will involve the group of high profile businessman Donald Trump.

Discipline, respect for authority

He's a busy man, but when he meets with you, he gives you the time you need. At a recent Sunday interview, he spent three hours with SundayBiz talking about his life as Presidential Adviser on Flagship Projects during the Estrada administration and his beginnings.

He shared anecdotes about Estrada—something he plans to write about in a book—and talked candidly about his life and passions. He was the architect of a lot of Estrada's moves, but he says he left when he felt he was no longer being listened to.

Aventajado is the son of a self-made man—a carpenter who eventually put up his own construction firm. His father then became a councilor when Joseph Estrada was mayor of San Juan. That was when his friendship with Estrada started.

Aventajado was influenced by two things when he was growing up—his father and the Boy Scout movement.

From his father he learned discipline.

"My father was a disciplined man. He had no vices."

From being a Boy Scout, he learned "respect for authority."

He was supposed to be with the group of boy scouts who were killed in a plane crash in 1963 while they were on their way to a jamboree in Greece, he adds.

At the last minute, his mother told him not to go and he complied, he recalls.

It was no surprise then that he wanted to be a soldier. He had already laid the groundwork by becoming the corps commander of

ENTREPRENEURIAL, B3


SON of a former carpenter, Aventajado at 2


AS PMA corps commander

Entrepreneurial aspect of a hostage negotiator

From page B1

[illegible]

Answered prayer

[illegible]



HIS years in the Boy Scout movement taught him respect for authority

[illegible]

Expansion

[illegible]

Serendipity

[illegible]



THE AVENTAJADO family



With Chuck Norris and Aventajado in an old photo

[illegible]

140 days

[illegible]



TERESITA and Robert were college sweethearts

Have P100K? Get a mobile veggie cart





Japanese firm helps youth …



Sunday Biz

Japanese firm helps youth fulfill dreams

'To return blessings from the Philippines'

By Joey A. Gabieta and Vicente S. Labro
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—ERICK Bugante is a 19-year-old young man from a remote town of Magsaysay, Occidental Mindoro.

He left their town early this month in search for a better future for him and his parents who depend on farming for a living.

The second eldest of a brood of six began his search [illegible] at the [illegible] Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda) auto mechanic training center in Tacloban City.

The Isuzu Motors Ltd. Japan funded the facility under the company's Heart and Smile project, a corporate social responsibility project that enables the company to share the blessings it received in its 70 years in business.

"We thought we would like to return [illegible] to the society which long supported Isuzu," said Yoshinori Ida, chair of Japan-based Isuzu Motors Ltd., during a press conference after the facility's inauguration last Nov. 17 in Tacloban City.

Ida said his company celebrated its 70th anniversary last April and that the facility was a milestone.

"The (corporate social responsibility) project's main objective is educational support for children in need of assistance for their growth and development in developing nations," he said.



YOSHINORI Ida, chair of Isuzu Motors Ltd. based in Japan, and Michael Joseph Diamond, country director of Plan Philippines in Tacloban City

He further disclosed that the company has initiated similar projects in Indonesia and Vietnam.

The project here in the Philippines is the third of its kind in Asia and the first in the Philippines, said Ida, who flew in from Japan. The company has also funded a project that benefited [illegible] children in [illegible] province in Vietnam and a support project for six primary schools in [illegible], Indonesia.

"The Tesda Auto Mechanic Training Center is precisely the project that contains everything I want to achieve in Isuzu's social contribution activity," Ida emphasized.

The 30 young scholars, composed of 11 girls and 19 boys with ages ranging from 15 to 22, have started training at the Tesda Auto Mechanic Training Center that boasts of a two-storey, [illegible]-sq.m. workshop, a cafeteria building, a covered court and a 100-bed capacity dormitory.

The scholars enjoy full accommodation, daily meals, and training uniform for free.

"Our parents could not afford to send us all to school because they don't have any money," Bugante said, scribbling on his notebook while being interviewed.

Bugante was among the 30 young men and women from poor families in six provinces of the country who wanted very much to continue their studies after completing high school but couldn't do so because of financial constraints.

Their wishes were granted when they qualified for a two-year automotive servicing training program at a Isuzu-funded facility at the Tesda regional complex, an early Christmas gift that could land them on a good paying job as a highly skilled automotive technician.

John Peter Escalante, a 17-year-old native of Barangay [illegible], [illegible] town in Southern Leyte, located about 180 km from Tacloban City, said he wanted to continue his studies but his parents could not send him to college because they are poor.

"I am very happy (to be among the scholars) because I could continue my studies," said Escalante, a son of a carpenter and a housewife. He has three younger siblings whom he hoped to send to school in the future.

Marites Cabarles, a 16-year-old high school graduate from the [illegible] Memorial High School, said that in her pursuit for higher education she left behind her jobless mother, farmer stepfather and three younger siblings in Barangay [illegible], Milagros town in the island-province of Masbate.

"I took the (qualifying) exam and when I learned that I passed, I grabbed the opportunity," she said.

Cabarles said she had to take advantage of the scholarship offer because she had no chance of pursuing her studies because her family could no longer afford to send her to school.

More than 1,000 young people from six Plan-covered poor provinces of Samar, Eastern Samar, Northern Samar, Mindoro, Masbate and Camotes Island in Cebu have applied for the Isuzu scholarship program but only 30 of them were accepted.

Michael Joseph Diamond, country director of Plan Philippines, said the applicants have undergone a rigid selection process, which took about one year.

He said the project opens a door to poor but highly deserving students in depressed areas, giving them "hope for a better and brighter future."

Juan Sabulao Jr., regional director of Tesda in Eastern Visayas, said the scholars have to complete four six-month training courses, from the qualification level of NC 1 (national certification 1) to NC 4.

Sabulao said that the project has been designed in such a way that the scholars have to complete the programs until NC 4. "Even if they are already employable at NC 2, they will have to continue until NC 4," he stressed.

He disclosed that around P300 million has already been poured into the Tesda Auto Mechanic Training Center, which is a social project of Isuzu.



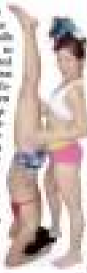
DIFFERENT of brand-new tools are on display at the new Tesda Auto Mechanic Training Center in Tacloban City.

Sunday LIFESTYLE



A concert weekend like no other

Gary V., Rihanna, Chris Brown—Manila is truly a rockin' city



TESSA!
Tessa Prieto-Valdes



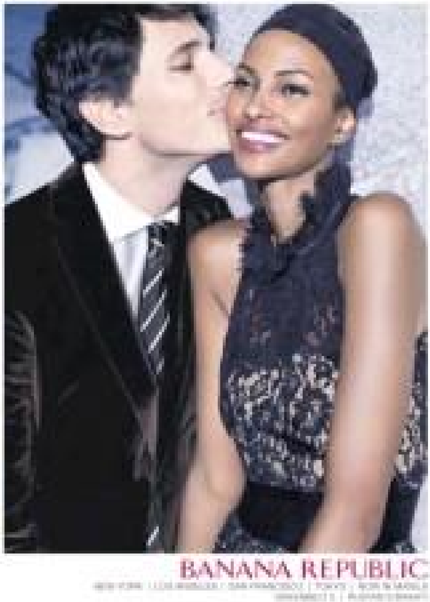
What Nene Quimson and Warren Buffet have in common

They're so serious about bridge, they join world competitions



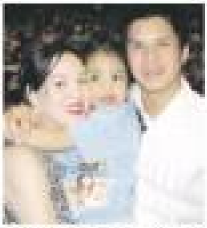
WHEN IT COMES TO games demanding mental prowess, age is no issue. Half of the six-member bridge team that represented the country in the first International Mind Sports Games (following the Beijing Olympics) were, technically speaking, senior citizens. The event included draughts, the Japanese game called go and bridge.






HAPPY family KC Concepcion, Sen. Francis Pangilinan and Sharon Cuneta


GARY V. guest performers Rachelle Anne Go, Karylle and Jericho Rosales


SWEET couple Claudine Barretto and Raymart Santiago with cute Sabina

A concert weekend like no other

From page F1

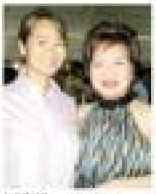
With the awesome rock singing of Paolo and the sensational dancing of Gabriel, parents Gary and Angeli were beaming with pride.

Gary never fails to credit his wife and manager, Angeli Pangilinan. His difficult battle with diabetes is constantly being fought with Angeli right beside him.

Gary's hoarse voice at the onset of the super-long concerts did not stop him from matching Concert King Martin Nievera's powerful energy. And that was just the opener! Gary V Live @ 25 was truly one of the best concerts ever!


FUN! Manager Leni Dalmacio at Big Sale


GARY V. fans Heidi Hocson and Pepsie Gantios


BIG SALE organizer Jamie Fernando and Hotel Elizabeth owner Beth Fernando

Homecoming

Speaking of silver anniversaries, Batch '83 of Immaculate Concepcion Academy Greenhills hosted this year's homecoming, highlighting the multi-faceted lives and personalities of the women from ICA.

Aptly called "Everything I Can," the event began with a Eucharistic celebration officiated by Fr. Jerry Orbos. After dinner, the star-studded program got all the ICA alumnae dancing and singing with the all-male band, The Cowboys!

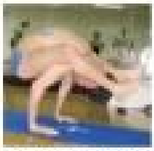
Host Tim Yap made sure the audience was in high spirits. There was also a special number by George Yang, who participated thanks to batch member Cindy Yap-Yang.

Both Batch '83 of ICA and Assumption College have exceptional women of style and substance. They are stellar examples of ageless beauties who live extraordinary lives. Some of these women, like Nina Garcia and Nanette de Leon, attribute their lean figures and glowing skin to yoga.


BIKRAM Yoga Manila competitors with teachers Christine Sarino and Marc Mead


GARY V. Live @ 25


UMBRELLA girls Bea Princesa, Giselle Petrovelli and Jelena Dato


BIKRAM yoga teacher Marc Mead

Yoga competition

The Bikram Yoga craze has spread throughout the city with new practitioners joining everyday. Bikram Yoga Manila (check out www.bikramyogamanila.com), owned by Tristan Chua, is organizing the first-ever yoga competition to be held in the country. The winners will go on to compete in the world championships in Los Angeles, next year.


SENIOR Bikram teacher Ron Santana conducts a seminar today at Bikram Manila.

There is a global initiative to petition for yoga as a demonstration sport in the Olympic games. This will hopefully be a medal sport just like rhythmic gymnastics or synchronized swimming.

After the NY marathon, my Yin and Yang focus is now on the Bikram Competition set for tomorrow, 7 p.m., at the Francisco Santiago Hall, BDO South Tower, Makati Ave. Tickets are available at the entrance.

Sponsored by Sun Life UK with Sequoia, Metro Magazine and Lifestyle Network, the Philippine Yoga Asana Championship (check out www.philippineyogachampionship.com) will be interesting to watch as competitors display perfect harmony of body, mind and spirit.


SUNDAY Bikram Yoga friends Bea Princesa, Sheila Dyse, Anne Margaret Lim, Melanie Dyse and Betty Khamlong

My practice is in the middle stages of yoga perfection, so I plan to just "display" at the event tomorrow. My outfit has been embellished and my glitter sarong all done.

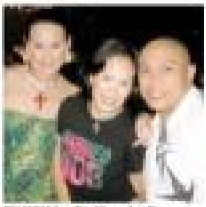
Senior Bikram instructor Ron Santana, who is here from the States to conduct summer clinic and act as senior judge, will surely be delighted not by my poses but by the vivid colors of my outfit. He is one of only seven authorized Bikram teachers and he is proudly Filipino.

Bargain centers

For those in full swing with Christmas shopping, check out two great bargain centers. The Immaculate Alumnae Association has its annual Assumption Bazaar at the Hotel InterCon until 7 p.m. today. The support will benefit the Assumption Mission Schools around the Philippines.

The Big Sale at the Mega Tent at 30 Meralco Avenue, Ortigas, is one event not to be missed. Today is the last day of the event, which offers 30 to 70 percent off brand names. I cut the ribbon last Friday with Hotel Elizabeth owner Beth Fernando and shopped for three hours.

The prices are unbelievable, and with BPI cardholders availing of interest-free installment payments, Christmas shopping is certainly a much happier affair!


RIHANNA fans Cris Albert, Ana Bleong and Victor Ortega


BIKRAM Yoga Manila owner and PYAC Organizer Tristan Chua


HAPPY shoppers Gladys Garcia, Dibia Francisco and Chin Francisco


HAPPY family Jackie and Teddy Dario with girls Gabriella and Kiara


FUN relatives Cristine Sarino, Mareneta de Leon and Jane Prieto


AWESOME yoga ladies Rochelle Thorpe, Lindi Ilano and Bessie Cruz


BIG SALE pretty merchants Nerissa Bongon, Happy Ondo and Samantha Lucero


BATCH '83 ICA homecoming classmates Mary Cha Reyes, Dr. Alcoma Lee Tan, Jackee Vertacto-Uy, Dr. Macheala Ongkiko-Caguioa, Cindy Yap-Yang and Heidi Hao-Tan


BIG SALE at Mega Tent owner Buddy Zamora, JR Hosin and Sports CEO Joi Fernando and Big Sale organizer Jackie Fernando

What Nene Quimson and Warren Buffet have in common





Fierce contest

Card sense

The secret

Early Christmas bake sale for charity

CEBU CEBU

Jaime Picornell



THE ST. JOSEPH FOUNdation held its annual Christmas bake sale earlier than the previous years, and with very good results. It was held at Paseo Ciudad of Ayala Center Cebu on a Saturday, chosen for a mall-wide sale. Imagine the crowds.

This vigorous effort entailed intense preparations and logistics. That meant busy hours for all the august members of this energetic group, starting with president Amelia "Mimi" Castillo Lu O, treasurer Lulu Mendiola de Aboitiz and secretary Tina Cess Ebrada. VP Lourdes Marquez was out of the country.

Most of the members of the foundation prepare their homemade delicacies and persuade their friends to do likewise. Everything is donated to the bake sale, and proceeds go to various charity projects. Funds are augmented by a raffle draw of major and minor prizes.



LULU Aboitiz and Gema Luisa Pido with a trolley full of Gustavian bread

> Gema Luisa Pido came with freshly baked crusty French bread from Gustavian. Oh yes, they multiply, chuckled chef Robert Lilja

Bestsellers

Sale day came and long before the mall opened, the ladies, clad in colorful Christmas aprons, were at Ayala Center. When the mall opened, a throng immediately headed for the bake sale.

First to go, and oddly enough, were the Spanish-style sausages of Lulu Aboitiz. They had mostly been pledged, but there was enough chistorra until its sell-out at 11 a.m. That's when Elena Ozcoghilos Young came and snagged a bagful.

Myra Magsaysay Tan was tending her sugar-free cookies, also gone in no time. Marilou Longa Mendezona's pile of ...

Home specialties

...



TERESE Jacinto, Mimi Lu O and Teresita Mendezona

Raffle

...

Roco Foundation presents 'Harana' by Mabuhay Singers

ROCO FOUNDATION IS HAVING "Tribute to the Filipino Serenade with "Harana: ..." a nostalgic trip to years of music and songs that have inspired lovers of the timeless Filipino folk melody.

The invitational concert will be held on Nov. 27, 8 p.m., at the Philamlife Auditorium.

From the original group that included ... the Mabuhay Singers now consist of ... Musical director is ... Cenaco of the Ateneo de Manila University.

Through the years, they have sung Filipino melodies like the kundiman, balitaw and danza, composed by noted composers like Nicanor Abelardo, ... and Levi Celerio.

The group has recorded more than 300 songs with Villar, Alpha and Mabuhay Records, with the orchestra conducted by Leopoldo Silos Jr.



Sunday LifeStyle Travel

Shangri-La's Boracay resort fast shaping up



The much talked-about first five-star sprawl in the island is opening soon



Aside from its diving sites, the country's high avian concentration has interested bird-watching-crazy Britons



Bird-watching to bring RP tourism to new heights





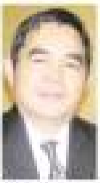
























Villa Bedroom

Shangri-La . . .

Diving to keep RP . . .



Diving to keep RP tourism afloat

Text and photos by Cheche V. Moral

IT'S LIKE OWNING A Ferrari and never driving it.

That's how Dave Allen likened the majority of Filipinos who don't scuba-dive. Allen is an American marine videographer and producer and publisher of www.ScubaMagazine.net, an online forum for the international diving community. He has taken a special interest in the Philippine dive sites since his first visit three years ago.

"Do you realize that you're in paradise and you've never been able to experience what Americans and Europeans will pay thousands of dollars for the privilege of going to see?" he asked rhetorically at the Dema (Diving Equipment and Marketing Association) Show 2008 held recently at the Las Vegas Convention Center in Nevada, USA.

Allen is just one of 6.9 million scuba divers in North America whom the Philippine Department of Tourism (DOT) hopes will keep the country's tourism industry through the global economic crisis.

The DOT bolstered its bid with its biggest participation yet in the Dema this year, targeting one of the "least affected" markets, according to Mary Anne Cuenca, Philippine tourism attaché in the US Southwestern State and Latin America.

Recession-proof

Diving is one of the DOT's so-called "special-interest" markets, which it believes to be "recession-proof." Others are the adventure sport, wellness and medical tourism markets. Meaning, divers may not go as often but will go at least once a year.

> It's one of the industry's 'recession-proof' special-interest markets

"Let's say there are 6.9 million divers and 20 percent is wiped out," cited Verner Velarde-Morales, Philippine tourism attaché in the US and Canada's Midwest Region. "But there's still over 5 million. If we target one percent of that, that's 50,000. That's big."

Lynn Funkhouser, a veteran underwater photographer based in Chicago who comes to dive in the Philippines for at least two months every year since 1978, shared that opinion.

"It's pretty scary. I've never lived through anything like it," she said of the US economy. "But you always have people wealthy enough to travel and they will go. And those of us who have to save and scrimp may not be able to go as often, but for moment we have two options, we'll go."

Funkhouser, a former flight attendant who found herself in the country for the first time on a side trip at the height of martial law, now calls the Philippines her second home.

"If I couldn't go, I'd feel deprived," she said. "It's like diving in LSD. It's out of this world!"

Coral Triangle

She also operates dive travels to the country and speaks at dive shows promoting Philippine dive sites dubbed "Simply the Best."

"Well, it's the best," she said emphatically. "The Philippines is right smack at the center of the 'coral triangle,' the most biologically diverse marine environments, according to the industry mag Scuba Diving. On the borders are Fiji, Indonesia, the Solomon Islands and parts of Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and Timor Leste.

"You have 2,500 species of fish," Funkhouser said. "Australia has 1,500. Who cares?"

A subspecies of anglefish that has eluded her for decades, she found only in Philippine waters.

Funkhouser, who was on a boat that was fired on while on a medical mission during the Marcos years, pooh-poohed US travel advisories against the country.

"It has nothing to do with safety," she said. "It has everything to do with what we want to put economic sanctions on... When Rafi Rao was checking scuba in Israel, the Philippines was in the travel advisory, but not Israel, and there was no war going on in the Philippines."

"The average American is safer in Davao than in LA," Allen, a Los Angeles native, also said.

Funkhouser's fliers underscore that there's "No malaria" in the country, contradicting a claim of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"I've talked to producers. There's none, except for a small corner of Palawan, which I'm not going to if not via helicopter. I don't listen to the State Department. I've gone there and I know it's wonderful."

Security queries

Gonzalo Galarosa III, a former ABS-CBN Star Circle talent turned JR Motors and now president of Aetoventures, a dive and golf travel firm based in San Francisco with its own resort in Anilao, Batangas, says this is the first time there were no queries on security.

"We say it's safe. Next question."

"In Europe we never hear this," noted the Connecticut-based Henry Agusto, VP of Marco Vincent Dive Resort in Puerto Galera. "But here we used to."

"I'm not as bothered with the travel advisory because it's always been there," said Dennis Bush Yu, the tourism attaché based in New York. "What's important is the personal experience," she added, referring to random incidents of theft and whatnot. "There's no cohesive tourism awareness in the country. As long as establishments and foreigners get around... Keep a real long."

Allen said what has been disturbing is that Philippine resorts and some government entities don't respond to e-mail inquiries—or take forever to do so. "In the Philippines, they expect us to text them. But that's not what we do in the US."

This year his group brought in 15 divers and sent e-mail inquiries to 14 resorts. Only three replied and it took them two weeks. Allen's video was aired on GMA-7, making it a "publicity bonus for the resort that responded."

"When the Philippines is awake, the US is asleep. We won't get up at 3 a.m. to make an expensive call," he said.

"The good thing with the present leadership in tourism," said Velarde-Morales of Secretary Joseph "Ace" Durano's administration, "is that there's a better appreciation of the realistic needs of our country. The approach now is niche market segments." Velarde-Morales has been in government service for 32 years.

Giveaways

The DOT's programs to attract the North American market was strengthened with a 220-admin-aided giveaway three years ago, which created the 34,000-name database for the department. It continues to rely on this database

NEXT PAGE



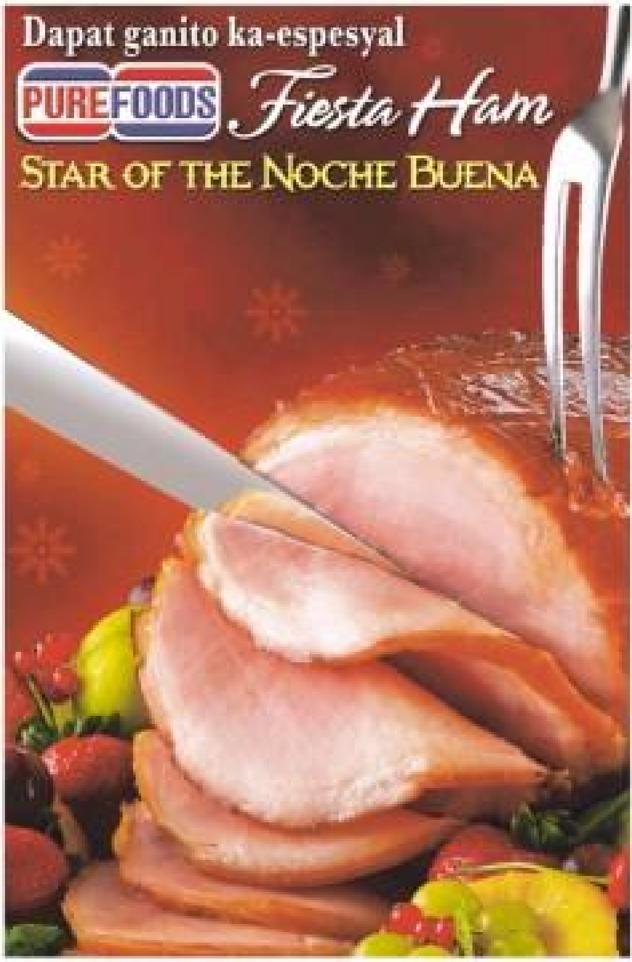
THE PHILIPPINE Department of Tourism's booth at the Dema Show 2008 in Las Vegas, Nevada



TEAM North America head Consuelo Jarilla-Apo; veteran diver and underwater photographer Lynn Funkhouser; with Philippine Tourism attachés in North America, Rene de los Santos (seated, from left) Verner Velarde-Morales, Emma Ruth Yulo and Mary Anne Cuenca



DAVE Allen, diver, underwater videographer and blogger



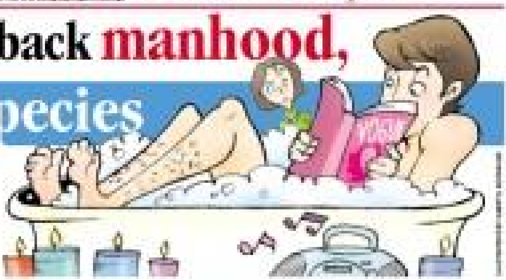


GARBED: Agusta of DOT-LA; Zony Pellegas of Team North America, Manny Agsalo, DOT-LA deputy director and Lara, also of DOT-LA (seated) Velarde-Morales, Jarilla-Apo, De los Santos and DOT consultant Prof. Tomas Lopez Jr.



DIVE operator-participants at the Dema 2008, including Mel and Henry Agusto of Marco Vincent Dive Center (Puerto Galera; Chris Heim and Lou Brown of Sea Explorers; JR Galarosa of Aetoventures and Jesica Lagusa of Philippine Airlines

It's time we welcome back manhood, the endangered species



Years of feminism have emancipated women, but emasculated our men into metrosexuals

[illegible]





Can OFW families be whole again?

ROOTS AND WINGS

Cathy Babao-Guballa



Philippine spa among Asia's best



It's time we welcome back manhood . . .

Admirable qualities

OFW is scared to come home and start anew

EMILY'S POST

Emily A. Marcos



You don't need hangers-on and leeches in your life; you've slaved enough for them



Milestones



QUINTILLA-GALLARDO



GRIJALDO-MAGSINO





Edu Manzano's favorite mobile phone



SUNDAY CROSSWORD

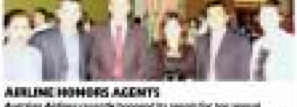
PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo GEOMETRY 101

ESTEE LAUDER INTRODUCES HOLIDAY COMPACT COLLECTION 2008

An all New Collection of Limited-Edition Solid Perfume and Powder Compacts for the Holiday Season







AIRLINE HONORS AGENTS

Saving the earth in Barcelona



GAUDI'S Sagrada Familia

By Antonio M. Claparols
Contributor

BARCELONA—IN THIS BEAUTIFUL city where Antoni Gaudi and Pablo Picasso found peace and inspiration, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) held its 4th World Conservation Congress early last month, in the hope of finding ways to save the world from extinction.

Indeed, earth as we know it faces the greatest challenge ever. The arctic ice is melting fast, species have begun to disappear even before they are identified, water and food shortages are plaguing many countries.

Almost all of the world's forests have been logged, and the remaining few are at risk of destruction.

Water, the essence of all life and once so bountiful, is drying up.

The oceans, the last frontier that once had bountiful marine resources, are now a garbage dump, with 150 dead zones at last count. These dead zones have run out of oxygen, thereby killing marine species. The home of Moby Dick and the great whales are now in danger of being all lifeless.

As I write this, the US economic bubble has burst and the global economy is feeling the crunch.

It was 60 years ago that the IUCN was founded by an eminent group of forward-thinking people in the forest city of Fontainebleau, in France. (Its founding name was International Union for the Protection of Nature.)

The IUCN was founded on Oct. 5, 1948, when the world was still recovering from the devastating effects of World War II.

Today, its founding fathers would be aghast by Earth's conditions.

Today, we are witnesses to how the planet that we were supposed to protect and conserve, has been ravaged.

Today, we face a shortage of food and water, with over a billion people living under poverty level.

Climate change

Global warming and climate change fueled by man's greed and lust for material wealth have reached unprecedented levels.

The global average surface temperatures have increased on the average by about 0.6 degrees Celsius during the period 1956-2006, resulting in an alarming rise of sea levels.

Melting ice caps on the mountain ranges have wrought havoc in many countries, flooding communities and ecosystems, eroding the rich top soil and ultimately destroying coral reefs, mangrove swamps and estuaries.

This year alone, Earth has experienced the most unpredictable weather ever, with fierce droughts, hurricanes and typhoons.

The United Nations millennium development goals set forth during the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, in Johannesburg, South Africa, have yet to bear fruit.

War is being waged in many parts of the globe and food lines have become a way of life.

The deserts continue to expand and reclaim what was once pristine forest.

There are so many issues to tackle, so many battles to wage, and yet the wanton degradation of our natural capital remains unabated.

Grameen Bank

Mohammad Yunus, the Nobel Peace laureate from Bangladesh, who is the founder and CEO of Grameen Bank, was one of the key speakers at the opening ceremony.

Another notable figure was the guest of honor, Prince Felipe of Asturias, who cited the many ecological problems, as well as his hopes that the Congress would bring the solutions needed to save Earth.

Yunus advocated the importance of social business and corporate social responsibility. He talked about Grameen Bank as a model for everyone to follow.

The bank extends loans to the poor without collateral in amounts as small as $10 and averaging $200. The repayment and payback ratio is nearly 100 percent, with a loan portfolio of over $8 billion.

Grameen Bank measures profitability not by dollars and cents but by how many people it has helped, and how many children it has fed, nourished and sent to school.

It is a far cry from the old business and economic models, and indeed, the bank has not been affected by the crisis the world economy is grappling with.

Yunus, whose latest innovation and venture was to build solar-powered homes in Bangladesh, even quipped that he was thinking of buying an American bank soon.

He said that over 150,000 homes in his country were being powered by solar energy, and their goal in this venture was to build a million such homes by the end of 2013.

I was very impressed by Yunus. His country is considered one of the poorest in the world, but it is on the right track.

How I wish that multinational corporations would follow his example so that we will still have hope of revitalizing nature and conserving its natural capital.

Inspiration

Touring the rich and cultural city of Barcelona, from Las Ramblas to Port Vell, from Gaudi's Sagrada Familia to the Museo Picasso, we were inspired by their works and enlivened by the hope that this Congress would galvanize the greatly needed impetus to save humankind.

Let not the beautiful city of Barcelona, whose charm can mesmerize anyone, fade away unnoticed.

Let it imbue the Congress delegates with the same inspiration that it gave Gaudi and Picasso.

Let us win this war and give nature the right to life.

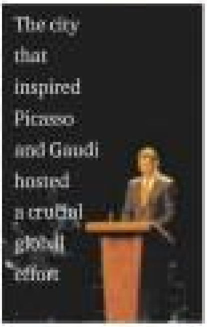
The author is the president of the Ecological Society of the Philippines.



CATEDRAL de Barcelona

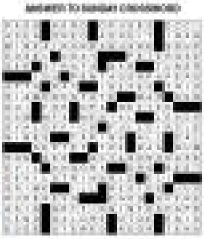


THE ESP delegation

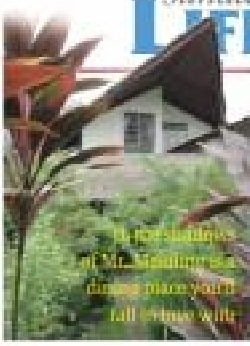




ANSWER TO SUNDAY CROSSWORD



Sunday LIFESTYLE Travel



WEEKEND DESTINATION

A second life for Lily Pad

Contributor

LITTLE DID BARBARA Gonzalez, "Twosome" to most, realize that her home Lily Pad in Calamba, in the shadows of Mt. Makiling, would become the smashing success it's turning out to be.

Having put up the 1,400-sq m

A SECOND F5

90 'carrozas' to join 29th Cofradia Marian procession

The event will be on Dec. 7, Sunday, around Intramuros



BOOTSIE and Oscar Violago, Hermanos Mayores for the 2008 Cofradia Procession

PURELY PERSONAL



Josephine Darang

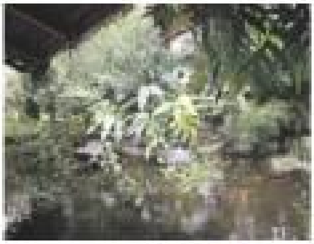
A second life . . .



A second life for Lily Pad

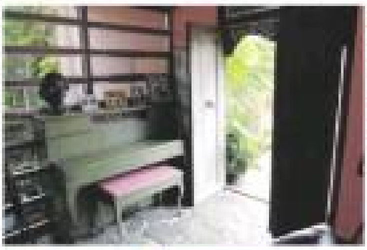
From page F1













LILY PAD RECIPE



FRIED DUCK FROM OSCAR'S FARM

WEEKEND DESTINATION

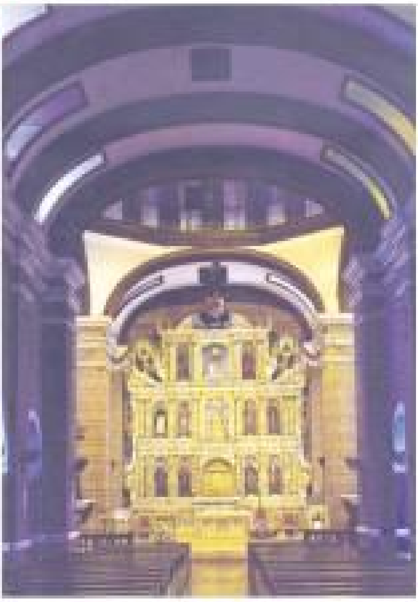
Ancient Marian image gets makeover



THE NUESTRA Señora de los Desamparados



THE CAMARIN de la Virgen





ENTERTAINMENT

Editor: Emmie G. Velarde

Trunklines: [illegible] | E-mail: [illegible] | Website: www.inquirer.net/lifestyle

'Look at me, I am old, but I'm happy'

IN A SPEECH GIVEN TO FELLOW SENIOR CITIZENS, REGAL Films president Lily Monteverde posed this challenge to the audience: "Who among you can jog around the Greenhills area for 15 minutes? Who among you can attend 9 to 11 meetings per day? I'm up until 3 a.m., supervising all my movies. Although we may feel old, this doesn't mean that we cannot be useful, active and happy."

OVERHEARD

Love-turned-hate offering

By the Entertainment Staff

THEY HAD A LESS-THAN-AMICABLE SEPARATION. But hours before a splashy premiere, Leading Man called and told his Ex-Girlfriend that his new movie was dedicated to her.

Perplexed, EG complained to friends about wishy-washy LM, calling his pronouncements "confusing."

After all, LM is now being romantically linked with his film's Leading Lady.

Days after the event, LM again called EG—furious because their "exchange" saw the light of print.

Speech defect

[illegible]

Wheeler-dealer

[illegible]



Triple whammy

[illegible]

Newfound glory

[illegible]

Surprising choice

NEW YORK—Hugh Jackman says [illegible] "Sexiest Man Alive." [illegible] AP

'Quickie' divorce

LONDON—The divorce proceedings between pop megastar Madonna and her British husband Guy Ritchie on Friday [illegible] of her vast fortune.

The case was listed as a "quickie" divorce under the names Ciccone M L v Ritchie G S, heard before a judge in the High Court's Family Division in central London.

According to The Times newspaper, Madonna will keep the bulk of her 300-million-pound [illegible] fortune, after they reached the [illegible] where the children will live. AFP

Very unusual

LONDON—Legendary Welsh singer Tom Jones shocked passers-by in central London on Wednesday by performing an impromptu set on a pavement to raise money for a cancer charity.

The 68-year-old thrilled hundreds of people who thronged around him, snapping photographs on their mobile phone cameras. [illegible] AFP

Joining the tell-all trend

LOS ANGELES—[illegible] AP

* * *

Top of the tabloids

The top show biz stories to hound tabloids this week. (And why are we moved, if we are moved.)

Quotes of the week

[illegible]

RUSHES SUNDAY

Hello?!

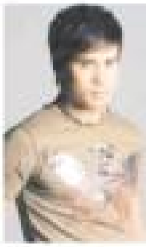
[illegible]

Vina's dilemma

[illegible]

Still on K and Dong

[illegible]





[illegible]



Love-turned-bate offe

CNN International airs 'All-Star Tribute'

GRAMMY AWARD-WINNING ARTISTS ALICIA KEYS AND JOHN Legend will perform at the "CNN Heroes: An All-Star Tribute," a two-hour program to air globally on Nov. 28 at 10 a.m. on CNN International. Expected to appear are Cameron Diaz, Meg Ryan, Forest Whitaker, Salma Hayek, Lucy Liu and Terrence Howard.

WE'RE GIVING A FREE LAPTOP EVERYDAY, FOR 25 DAYS!

NO ONE DOES CHRISTMAS LIKE PLDT myDSL!



PLDT myDSL subscribers can win one of 25 Acer, MSI Wind, Neo, Dell, Toshiba, Lenovo and Macbook laptops & wireless routers to be raffled off daily from Nov. 22 to Dec. 20, Mondays to Saturdays on Eat Bulaga. Winners can be viewed at www.myworldmydsl.com. Now is the best time to get PLDT myDSL!

FREE NDD up to 12 mos.

FREE 30!

Check out PLDT myDSL crew's ... UPGRADE at your favorite PC shops every Saturday and grab great PC deals at the ULTRA BROADBAND BLOWOUT coming soon!

ENTERTAINMENT



Historic TV interview that still makes the news



Never boring

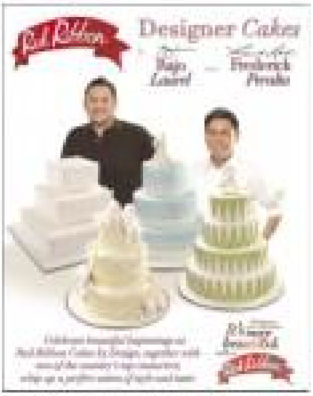
Complicated characters

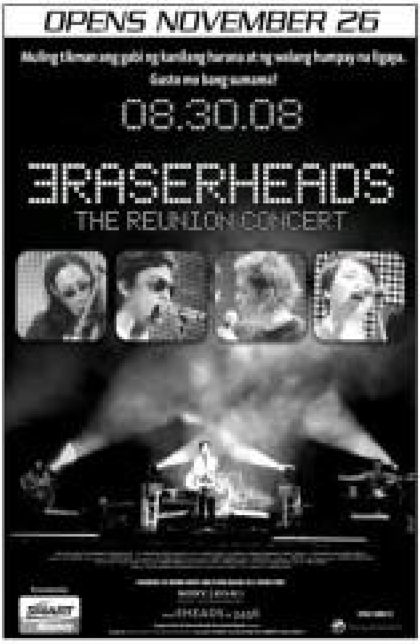
ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

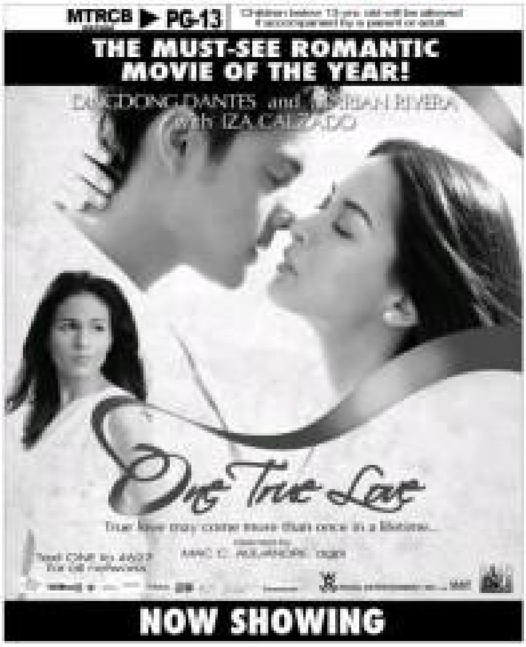


Ruben V. Nepales









CINEMA ACCESS: 635-5555

MOVIEWORLD

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMA MOVIE GUIDE

GALLERIA

1 JAMES BOND: QUANTUM of SOLACE
2 ONE TRUE LOVE
3 MONSTER SLAYER
4 SEX DRIVE
5 Reserved for VICTORY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
6 MADAGASCAR 2: ESCAPE to AFRICA
7 LALAMUNAN
8 MONSTER SLAYER
9 WALANG KAWALA
10 PASSENGERS

ERMITA

1 MONSTER SLAYER
2 BURN AFTER READING
3 ONE TRUE LOVE
4 JAMES BOND: QUANTUM of SOLACE
5 SEX DRIVE
6 MADAGASCAR 2: ESCAPE to AFRICA
7 ONE TRUE LOVE / WALANG KAWALA
8 LALAMUNAN
9 PASSENGERS

METRO EAST

1 PASSENGERS
2 MADAGASCAR 2: ESCAPE to AFRICA
3 ONE TRUE LOVE
4 MONSTER SLAYER
5 SEX DRIVE
6 BURN AFTER READING
7 JAMES BOND: QUANTUM of SOLACE
8 THE WOMEN

NOVALICHES

1 JAMES BOND: QUANTUM of SOLACE
2 MADAGASCAR 2: ESCAPE to AFRICA
3 THE WOMEN
4 ONE TRUE LOVE

PIONEER

1 SEX DRIVE
2 BURN AFTER READING
3 ONE TRUE LOVE
4 MONSTER SLAYER

STA. ROSA

1 JAMES BOND: QUANTUM of SOLACE
2 CITY of EMBER
3 BURIED ALIVE
4 ONE TRUE LOVE

LIPA

1 JAMES BOND: QUANTUM of SOLACE
2 ONE TRUE LOVE
3 NIGHTS in RODANTHE
4 LIVING HELL

DASMARIÑAS

1 TROPIC THUNDER
2 LIVING HELL
3 JAMES BOND: QUANTUM of SOLACE
4 ONE TRUE LOVE

IMUS

1 ONE TRUE LOVE
2 JAMES BOND: QUANTUM of SOLACE
3 MADAGASCAR 2: ESCAPE to AFRICA
4 LIVING HELL

ANGELES

1 JAMES BOND: QUANTUM of SOLACE
2 ONE TRUE LOVE
3 LIVING HELL
4 THE STRANGERS

STARMILLS

1 MADAGASCAR 2: ESCAPE to AFRICA
2 ONE TRUE LOVE
3 THE WOMEN
4 MY ONLY U
5 JAMES BOND: QUANTUM of SOLACE
6 CITY of EMBER

BACOLOD

1 THE SISTERHOOD of the TRAVELING PANTS 2
2 BURIED ALIVE
3 TROPIC THUNDER
4 MADAGASCAR 2: ESCAPE to AFRICA
5 ONE TRUE LOVE
6 JAMES BOND: QUANTUM of SOLACE

ILOILO

1 JAMES BOND: QUANTUM of SOLACE
2 ONE TRUE LOVE
3 MADAGASCAR 2: ESCAPE to AFRICA
4 THE SISTERHOOD of the TRAVELING PANTS 2
5 BURIED ALIVE
6 EAGLE EYE

SM Cinema movietime

METRO MANILA

RESERVED SEATS NOW AVAILABLE

IMAX
MADAGASCAR 2: ESCAPE TO AFRICA
SEA MONSTER
DINOSAUR 3D

THE PODIUM
QUANTUM OF SOLACE
BURN AFTER READING

CINEMA 1
QUANTUM OF SOLACE

LUZON

SOON TO OPEN

VISAYAS - MINDANAO

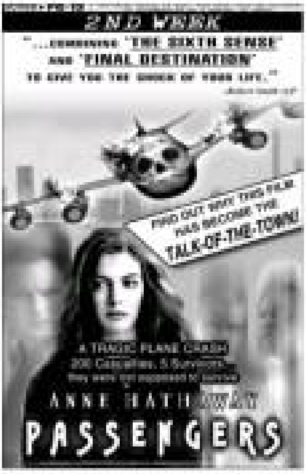
MTRCB scolds 'TV Patrol,' Velvet

Historic TV interview...



AT THE CINEMAS

AT THE MALLS

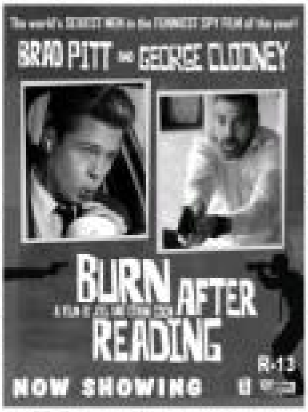


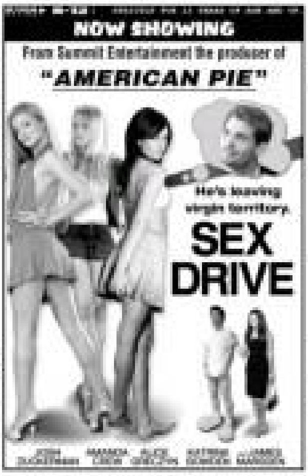


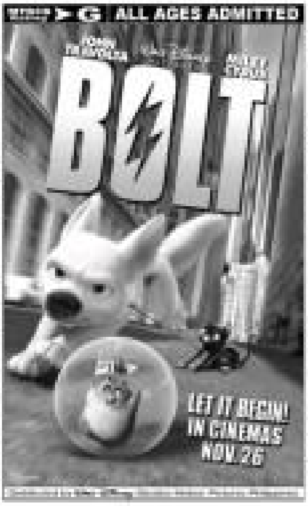












Do You Know...

This show biz week ... years ago

1942: THE MOTION PICTURE "Casablanca," starring Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman, had its world premiere in New York City.

1968: The Beatles' "White Album" was released.

1983: Actress Mary Tyler Moore married cardiologist Dr. Robert Levine in New York.

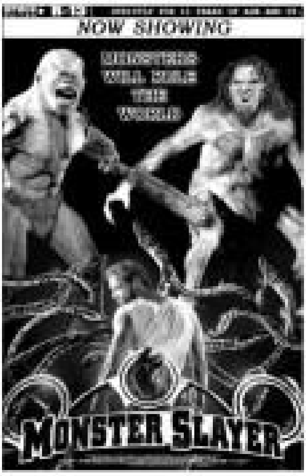
1991: Queen singer Freddie Mercury died of complications from AIDS at his home in London. He was 45.











For three celebrity comic wannabes, P100,000 is no joke



Finals night

Comedic strengths

Political spoof


DAGDAG 10 MINUTES
sa US, Canada at Hong Kong!
Tawagan abroad.
Mas pinahaba. Mas pinasulit.
Mula sa maaasahang
PLDT Budget Card.
UP TO 43 mins.
UP TO 76 mins.
P3/min. sa US, Canada at Hong Kong
P5/min. sa China, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore at Taiwan
P8/min. and P15/min. to other destinations
PLDT Budget CARD
AVAILABLE AT:
ALL PLDT BUSINESS OFFICES